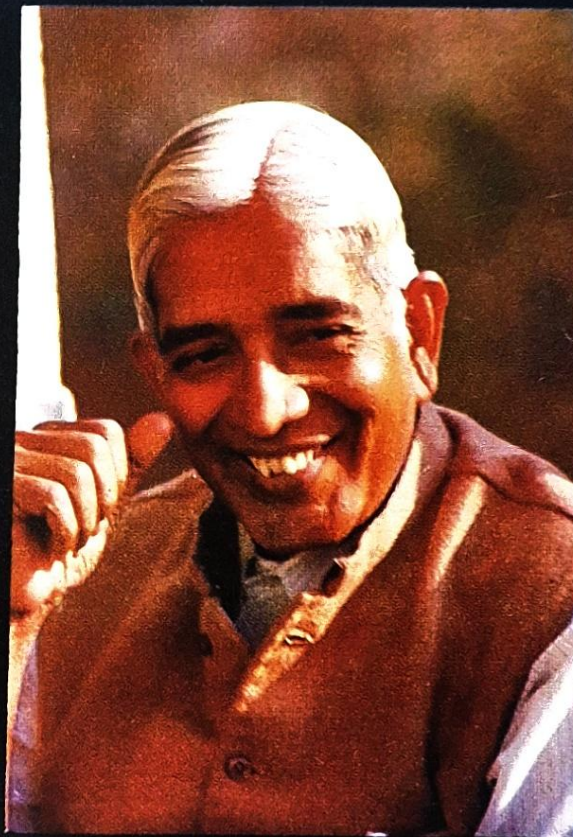
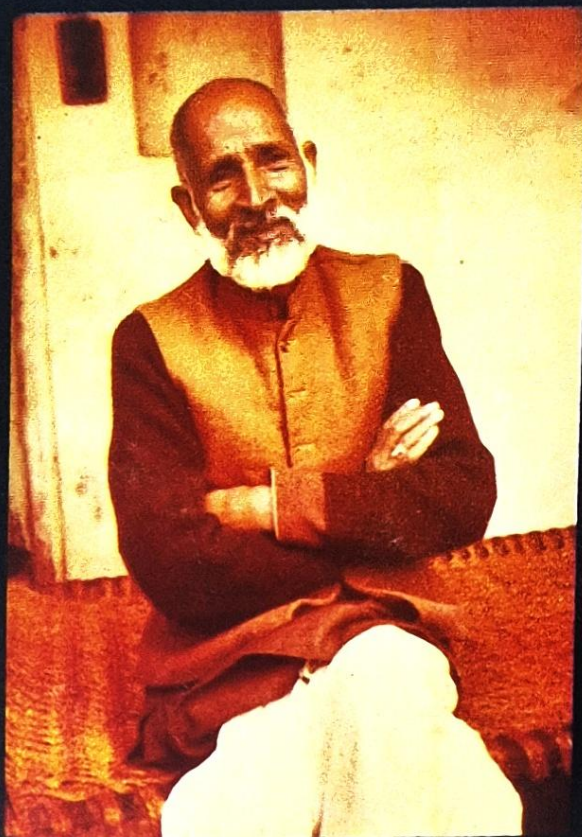


Book One

Babuji Maharaj and His Disciple



Book Two

The Guiding Hands - a collection of spiritual poems

Stella Jaquered-Davis

BOOK ONE

Babuji Maharaj and His Disciple

by

Stella Jaquero-Davis



Shri Ram Chandra Mission
Switzerland

First Edition: 1993 - 2500 copies

© Shri Ram Chandra Mission 1993
Châtel-St-Denis, Switzerland

Photographs on the cover by kind courtesy of the
Photographic Archives of the SRCM in Denmark.

ISBN 2-940093-01-6

Contents

PART ONE

Finding the Path	7
Visiting the Master	9
Divine Hospitality	12

PART TWO

A Promise Fulfilled	35
France 1976	55
Copenhagen 1976	59

PART THREE

Growing Pains	67
The Setting Sun	91

PART FOUR

From Babuji to Chariji	101
------------------------	-----

PART ONE

Finding the Path

It all started in December 1972. Babuji came into my life on Christmas eve through Vera and Elidir Davies. Vera was being treated for cancer in an Antroposophic hospital in Arlesheim near Basel, at the same time as my sister-in-law. Vera spoke to me about Babuji and lent me a copy of "Voice Real" Vol. 1 and, having finished the first part of her treatment, she returned to England.

For someone who was just coming out of a severe spiritual crisis this little book, radiating simple and plain truth, was like a life-buoy thrown to a drowning person. The photograph of Babuji on the cover with his expression of extreme simplicity and humility won my heart and beckoned to a memory lying deep within. There followed joy mingled with anguish, joy at having found what one has always been unconsciously looking for, joy at the inaccessible becoming suddenly more accessible, but anguish at the fear

of not being worthy, not being accepted and not knowing where to go from there.

In February 1973 Vera came back to Arlesheim for further treatment. It was a long wait for a thirsty soul. I asked her if she thought Babuji might accept me as a disciple and what I should do. She laughed and said, "Just write to him and tell him a little bit about yourself, and send him a photograph". I did so straight away. Babuji's reply arrived three very long months later! The date on the letter was my birthday - Babuji was the most beautiful birthday present I have ever received. With the letter was a printed piece of paper, explaining the practice. It was written in English on one side and in Hindi on the other. Babuji said in his letter, "Go ahead and meditate as per the enclosed slip and I will be helping you from here." One and a half years later I met Babuji for the first time in India in December 1974.

Visiting the Master

An intense craving to meet Babuji had been growing steadily for some time and my husband, who had started meditating in the meantime, and myself decided to go to India to see him. As neither of us had ever been to India before we joined in with a group of Danes who were leaving from Copenhagen. There was something "magic" about that first visit to Babuji that was never to be felt again in subsequent journeys.

On arriving in Delhi our Danish brothers and sisters said that we should start looking for a hotel in which to spend the night. I had not realised that there would not be a train for Shahjahanpur straight away. I almost sat on the floor and wept with disappointment. The idea of having to wait another day before seeing Babuji was unbearable. One of our Danish brothers took pity on me and suggested that we share expenses and take a taxi to Shahjahanpur straight away.

No sooner said than done and off we went, the five of us, Roland, Allen, myself and two Indians, one who knew how to drive and one who knew the way to Shahjahanpur. It was quite an experience, and it was easy to understand after that why people prefer to use the airlines to go from one town to another, even when the distances are quite short. Anyway, with Master's grace, as the saying goes, we arrived safe and sound. On alighting from the car Allen said, "Master is just behind you". I whirled around and there was Babuji getting out of a bicycle-rickshaw. With an automatic reflex I stupidly held out my hand to shake hands with him in the western manner. He looked at it for a moment and then very gingerly took my hand and shook it. I felt quite embarrassed. I noticed with surprise that his eyes appeared to be blue. Closer observation later on revealed that he was starting a cataract and that there was a blue rim around the iris of his eye. In strong daylight the opaque lens was apparent behind the iris and made his eyes seem blue.

When we had finished introducing ourselves Babuji rushed off and started calling out to people in the courtyard. I was rather surprised at his appearance, and the flimsy piece of material he wore around the lower part of his body revealing a pair of very skinny legs. In those days we did not have Chari's book "My Master" to warn us, it was written later. Babuji asked us to follow him and he led us to the doorway of a house on one side of the courtyard. He then darted up a very steep stairway at an amazing speed and showed us to the door of a room with a bolt and lock. The lock was fastened and he did not seem to have the key, so he started down the stairs again. A few seconds later he was back up. He undid the lock, opened

the door and ushered us into the room. Having recovered my wits after the initial shock to the extent that I began to realise that there was an elderly gentleman, and my master at that, running up and down steep stairs I rather belatedly said, "You shouldn't be doing all this Master. It's too much for you." He bobbed his head in the inimitable Indian way and left us.

Divine Hospitality

Bernadette Van Steven, as she was called at that time, had been staying in the room we were given. She came in to remove her belongings and told us that we should go down for tea. She led the way back down into the courtyard, crossed over to a doorway on the opposite side, and passed through into a smaller inner courtyard which seemed to be the family's private living quarters. A small dark room on the left was the westerners' dining room. There was a table and chairs, and on one wall a sort of mandala had been scratched on a rectangular patch of mud applied over the whitewash. One of Babuji's granddaughters, Ninni, told us later on that it had been done by her mother. Her mother did a new one each year on a particular date in relation to the celebration of some holy festival. It was very decorative and well done. The room was very dark indeed and opened out onto this inner courtyard where we could catch brief glimpses of Babuji's family life during

mealtimes. Otherwise nobody went in there, at least nobody western. Some Indian lady abhyasis did because they did not mix too much with their abhyasi brothers. At that time Babuji had his sleeping quarters in this part of the house and while we were having our meals we could watch Babuji in wonderment, sitting all by himself on the ground in front of his room, lost in Divine consciousness and taking that simple meal in his simple way.

Oh, my beloved Master!

*We watch you as though in a dream
Our life is but a screen
To the Reality where you abide
And in which, one day, with
your help, we shall reside.*

Later that evening we sat out on the veranda with Babuji who was wrapped up in a dark grey blanket and puffing away on his hookah. I looked at him with mixed feelings. I had been meditating for one and a half years on my own, without any introductory sittings, without a preceptor. I had accepted him on sheer faith and from that faith had grown a strong love and devotion for a person I had never seen, and that love and devotion had drawn me all the way to India to be with him. Now that I was there in front of him what did I feel? Apart from feeling a bit intimidated, I could not honestly say. Babuji darted a look in my direction and said: "Why have you come to me?" I replied: "I don't want To Be any more." He thought over that for a while. Then he said: "Well, I will answer you from your side.

We want the Peacegiver, not peace itself. The idea should be that God is restless to see you." "And not for us to see Him?" Added Allen. "Yes, God may become restless to see you. At this time we are restless to see Him. But at one stage He should be restless to see you. Then the mystery is solved. You have come to me and I am very happy, and if I go to you, you will be happy. Although you know that I am here and you are at your place. No, but we feel happy wherever we are. From such a distance a man has come to me, and similarly, in my case, my sister has come from such a long distance. So that is a sort of union with thought. So we should have unity in thought, I mean with God." So what Chari was to say years later is perfectly illustrated here; Babuji started off by correcting the motive that led us to him, because we ask for paltry things:

*"The pain of having an ocean to give to he
whose thirst is but for a glass of water."*

Babuji went on talking, answering questions. Then he called out to one of our Indian brothers to bring blankets for us and I assured him that it was not necessary as we had sleeping bags. So Babuji cancelled his order and darted another one of his looks at me.

For a newcomer to India it is hard to imagine that it can be so cold at night, in Northern India that is. Our sleeping bags were totally inadequate and we almost froze to death. So that was our second lesson that night; the first being to aim for the highest when you have a guide capable of giving it to you, and the second learning how to

let go. He knows what is best for us and what we need, even down to a small detail like a blanket.

Well, we had come to Ram Chandra's school to learn and there he was, teaching us right from our arrival day. We were too proud to go and ask him if we could have the blankets after all, so he let us freeze!

We were told that breakfast was at nine in the morning. Babuji was not an early riser, so we did not have to get up so early in those days. Indians do not take breakfast as we know it. They usually just have a cup of tea. Babuji, who had travelled to the west for the first time in 1972, had taken note of our alimentary habits and we found a "continental breakfast" waiting for us in the little dining-room. Such attentiveness to our tastes was very touching. Quite often Babuji would go to the market with his little shopping bag saying, "I know what they like."

Another thing he had taken note of was that we use toilet paper in the west. There were rolls and rolls of it hanging up on a string in his office, just the way we would hang up a string of onions in our kitchens in the west.

It was in this office that meditation was held. It was a small room about 5 X 3 metres that opened onto the main courtyard. The walls were whitewashed, and the entire surface of the floor was covered with material. There was a cot at either end of the room. Nobody ever approached the one on the left as it was there that Lalaji would come to see Babuji. In the middle there was a ground-level desk in front of a barred window. The window did not have any glass panes and through

it you could see into the street behind Babuji's house. I used to call this street "Peanut Lane" as there were several peanut vendors there with piles of peanuts everywhere. There were railway tracks just the other side of the road. It was a very dirty road indeed, with potholes full of muddy water. Grimy little street urchins scampered around in the filth. And it was here, in this setting, that lived our beloved Master, the greatest soul in the universe!

Babuji used to hold meditation sitting on cushions in front of his ground-level desk with his back to the window. The first day we took chairs into the room but as they were rather cumbersome and a nuisance, we tried sitting on the floor with our backs propped up against the wall and our legs stretched out in front of us. It was years later that we learnt that it was considered very bad manners in India to show the soles of one's feet to anyone. And there we had sat, time after time, in front of Babuji, with our legs outstretched and our feet turned towards him! Forgive us Babuji, we did not know. Neither he nor anybody else ever mentioned it to us.

In the evenings, after meditation, Babuji attended to his correspondence. He would switch on an electric heater, pick up a letter at random and read it. It could be a letter he had already read several times, or a new one. His correspondence was spread out higgledy-piggledy all over the desk and the fact that Babuji's beautiful, inner divine order had not necessarily to be reflected in his filing system was a consoling thought to a very untidy abhyasi who happened to be sitting in front of him! The letters were eventually gathered up into a bundle in a big

bedsheet and hung up on a peg in the corners of the room. These were Babuji's "filing cabinets".

About three months before coming to India, I had read in one of the Mission's books, an account of a dream or vision that our sister Birthe in Denmark had. In this dream or vision she saw the Mission's emblem and the description she made of it seemed very beautiful. I felt I would like to try and reproduce it on a sort of banner, using this description as a guideline. All the time it was being done, I felt Babuji's presence watching what I was doing and I got the idea that he might like to have one for the meditation hall he was building in Shahjahanpur. I had seen photographs of the hall and it seemed to be a huge place. The banner I made was only about 120 x 120 cms and would have looked like a postage stamp hanging up in that big hall, so I made a much bigger one, double that size.

Then a little technical problem arose. Most of the components (the mountains, sun etc.) of the emblem were cut out and applied onto the basic material and then glued on, which meant that it could not be folded to be put in a suitcase, as that would leave fold marks that could not be ironed out because of the glue. So all the basic things were done, leaving the rest to be completed in India. Unfortunately, in the room Babuji had given us there was only one very tiny little table and I was wondering how I was going to spread the banner out so as to be able to finish it. The next morning Allen came to me and said: "Would you like to see where I'm staying?" So I followed him into his room which was on the ground floor and there was this huge table, taking up almost half of the room space! I asked Allen if I could use the

table, explaining why and he said he would not mind at all. When Babuji heard what was going on (as though he did not already know!), he came in to inspect the work. He pointed out that the letters in Sanskrit *Om Tat Sat* and *Sat Pad* were not very recognizable and asked our Indian brother Col. Tandon from Bareilly to redraw them. Then he noticed that the Swastika on the bottom was not quite correct and wanted that redone. Well, the Swastika brings up rather painful memories to the collective unconscious of most Europeans, and it looked more like an X than a Swastika. So when Master went out I put it back like an X again and then an Indian brother or sister would come in and change it again. When they went out I would put it back in the X form again until, finally, our sister Solvejg from Denmark came in and sewed it down very firmly, in the Swastika form, saying that after all, it was for over here and I would not have to look at it anyway. Finally everybody joined in in making the banner and it was quite fun. When it was finished we waited until Babuji had gone out and then we hung it up to give him a surprise, using a bamboo stick for the purpose. As the stick was a bit crooked the banner did not drape properly and brother Tandon (probably used to meticulously drawn out military flags) was worried about the wrinkles. Anyway, when Babuji came back, he seemed happy with it and said that he would hang it on an aluminium bar.

In the evenings we usually sat out on the veranda with Babuji, sometimes in companionable silence, leaving him to do his work when he had that faraway look. At other times he could be quite talkative, or else he would invite us to ask him questions.

While we were staying with Babuji he was having quite a lot of problems with the construction of the Ashram. Some of our Indian abhyasi brothers, who were helping him with supervising the building of it, would come in and report on the day's activities, with much head bobbing and wagging. It is fascinating to watch a group of Indian people conversing, and how they convey different meanings by the way they bob their heads. It can mean approval or disapproval, respect or annoyance, assent or disagreement, admiration or astonishment. In fact, practically anything. But you would need to be Indian, born and bred, to be able to interpret the movements. It is a characteristic of our Indian brothers and sisters that people from other countries find very funny and also very endearing. During their conversation in Hindi, the words "Green Marbles" kept coming up. On asking Babuji what it was all about he said that it was a company in the north of India that supplied the marble for the meditation hall. Sometimes the whole lorryload of marble slabs would arrive cracked and broken and this was delaying the whole project. It seemed that the company offered no guarantee, and that Babuji had to pay for the marble whether it arrived intact or not. Apparently, it was not possible to take out an insurance, overroad deliveries being so hazardous no company was prepared to cover such a risk. This was completely incomprehensible to our minds as, in our part of the world, there would be no question of paying for goods that had not been safely delivered. It was distressing to see all the worry that the building of the Ashram was causing Babuji. He used to go out to the site every day to inspect the work, in spite of his poor health.

One day he decided that we should all go out and see the place. He sent one of our Indian brothers off to the rickshaw stand to negotiate the price of transporting the whole group out there. Being our host he wanted to take care of the whole thing. Many of us were very touched by this fatherly care and allowed him to go through with it whilst making the silent vow that we would repay it a thousandfold.

We all walked down to the rickshaw stand, through the hustle and bustle of village life. The villagers were not used to seeing westerners in those days and particularly not so many at a time. The rickshaw cyclists had somehow got wind of the fact that they were to transport Europeans and had put their rates up. Babuji, who was not prepared to allow himself to be swindled, hired only three or four rickshaws from cyclists who were prepared to accept the usual rate, plus one tonga. The "gentlemen" went off in the rickshaws, leaving the tonga for us ladies. Well a tonga, for people who do not know what it is, is an incredible contraption that made the Irish sidecars of my youth seem like royal carriages in comparison. It tilts up in the front and of course slopes down in the back, which means you have to hang on as best you can so as not to slip off. It was drawn by a particularly miserable looking horse which looked as though it had seen better days. We set off, looking extremely undignified, to the general hilarity of the villagers who by this time were splitting their sides laughing.

The Ashram site was quite a way out and we were extremely relieved when we finally arrived. Babuji showed us around, explaining what a tricky job it had been to cast the crescent shaped

adornments of the meditation hall. The shape seemed particularly appropriate for the Shri Ram Chandra Mission in light of the fact that Chandra means moon.

*In his orbit round the earth
Lord Chandra dispenses without dearth
Nectar from the benevolent sun
so that darkness we may shun.
Firing the innermost core of our hearts
with multitudinous Divine sparks
Imperceptibly, the icy outer layers
yield to the hand of One who really cares.
Nullifying the erroneous tendencies
of our thoughts
Lord Chandra, relentless in His efforts,
Instils translucence in place of opacity
so that we may develop the capacity
To transcend the necessity of being
and thus our heavenly kingdom redeem
Yearning to become children of the light
and a glimpse of our Eternal Father
catch sight.*

Babuji went on to explain that he had chosen this land because there was lots of water underground and that the water was excellent

because it contained minerals that were very good for the health. Years later when the Ashram was finished and we had to stay out there, every day we were given a can of this water to take in to Babuji. He found it was good for his stomach and helped to reduce his hyper-acidity. The can was exactly like the milkcan I used to have to pick up in the dairy on my way home from school as a kid, long before the tetrapacked milk era!

Babuji had a keen eye for detail and for the workmen's sake, he pointedly stopped in front of the lightening conductor which he called in his picturesque English a "lightening arrestor". He did this in order to let them take due note of the fact that he had seen that a few screws were missing in the clamp that fixed it to the wall. He showed us the marble slabs which had caused him so much worry and a workman wet one of them so that we could see what it would look like once it had been polished.

He then took us into an annex which was to be the living quarters. On the ground floor there was a big room which was to be the main dining-hall. In later years it was in fact more often used as a dormitory or a depot for chairs. Babuji showed us into another small room which was to be the westerners' dining-room. I asked him why all the brothers and sisters could not just dine together and with an amused twinkle in his eyes he replied that the westerners needed chairs. Having seen all that was to be seen, we returned to Babuji's house. The contrast between the atmosphere in the village and Master's home was so sharp, it was like returning to a haven after a storm out at sea.

The unhurried movements of our Indian sisters, as they went about their household tasks, was soothing. They have a slower pace than western women, maybe due to their saris or maybe due to a different way of life, where less value is given to the factor time. In our part of the world haste is synonymous with efficiency, and a leisurely pace would be considered unbusinesslike. This is particularly striking when western women adopt Indian dress. They may wear saris well but there is something about their brisk step that sometimes makes it seem ungainly, until they adopt the "gliding" step of our Indian sisters.

One of them used to go around holding a big man's handkerchief over her mouth and nose. We first of all thought that she must have a very bad cold. As she did not seem to sneeze or cough very much we then thought that maybe she is subject to frequent nose bleeds. That did not seem to be the case either. So we thought that she must be indisposed by some odour or other, it is true that there was sometimes cowdung in the courtyard. Our brother Col. Tandon clarified the mystery, telling us that she was practising strict observance of *ahimsa* (non-violence). As even breathing in and maybe destroying micro-organisms suspended in the air was considered to be a form of violence.

While we were staying with Babuji, his youngest son, who had just got married, came to visit him with his new bride. She used to go tottering around with the tail end of her sari drawn over her face, with golden coins sewn along the edge to weigh it down. Obviously, she could not see where she was going and we wondered why she hid her face like that. Col. Tandon, who was a very reliable source of information about many

things, explained that newly-wedded girls should not show their faces to their elders as it was considered unseemly. This seemed a strange custom indeed as the fresh young face of one's son's new bride would be a source of happiness and rejoicing in our part of the world. Babuji, who was normally the personification of gentleness, spoke to her rather sharply at times. Of course Babuji, contrarily to Chari, had a lot of women in his household. In fact, he was completely outnumbered, so maybe he was just letting her know who was going to be the boss in the house, right from the start.

We used to watch the ladies of Babuji's household with sorry admiration. There was a steady flow of visitors from within India and without and this created a lot of work, as well as being an intrusion into their privacy and family life. Yet they were always smiling, always good-humoured, in spite of the conditions in which they had to accomplish their tasks. The meals for all these people were cooked on gas burners placed on the ground, and Babuji's womenfolk would pass hours and hours, crouched down, preparing all this food. They seemed to take joy in it, chattering gaily among themselves and producing it with love. It was also amazing how they managed to remember our names, strange names for them and not always easy to grasp. We had only to tell them once and they immediately memorised the name and the face that went with it. They were the perfect example of Babuji's teaching that when the heart is there, when love is there, anything is possible.

To try and lighten their work abhyasis from overseas brought all sorts of domestic appliances,

electrical gadgets and whatnot. Babuji would immediately confiscate them and lock them up in a cupboard, saying that they would only lead to discontent, that when you have one thing, then you want another and finally the streamlined American-styled kitchen that goes with it.

The washing up was done in a zinc bucket of cold water, again in a crouched down position on the ground. The plates were moistened, then rubbed with a mixture of cinders and sand, rinsed in the bucket of cold water and left to dry on the cobblestones of the courtyard. There again there was well-meaning interference, in the form of washing-up liquid. This gave disastrous results as the open-air drains around the house were soon overflowing with suds.

Finally, Babuji forbade us to give presents to the members of his family or to the staff of his household. He himself used to get tons of pullovers and all sorts of things, that he would wear for one day to please the person who had given the present and then give it to someone who was in need of a pullover. He rarely kept anything for himself.

Babuji liked to eat his evening meal quite late. Generally, we were called first and, when we had finished, we would come back to the veranda to sit with Babuji who was usually installed in his favorite chair with his "cobra". This was the name we gave to the black tube of his hookah, coiled around the leg of his chair. Then one of his granddaughters would come to tell him that his meal was ready. As is the custom in the west, we would stand up as a mark of respect when Babuji got up and again when he came back. After a

while, Babuji started to stand up too, when we got up. Horrified, we explained to him that he should not stand up for us because for us it was in deference to his age and what he represented. He laughed and said: "I'm adaptable". He certainly was and a delightfully courteous old man too.

The night fell quickly at that time of the year and with it a cold dampness that settled over the town, retaining and mingling the characteristic sounds and smells of Indian country life: the smoke from the dung fires, the spicy smell of cooking, the peanuts being roasted in "Peanut Lane", the chiming of bells in a nearby temple and the periodic shouts of the night watchman who shouted something that sounded like "BLACKOUT". Babuji told us that he, and several other families in the street where he lived, hired him as a watchman and that he shouted like that to show that he was doing the job and not sleeping somewhere in a corner.

During the day the "Sahaj Marg Printing Press" was in full swing and we went in to see what went on. It was like travelling back in time because the printing press was a real museum piece. The printer was crouched on a high stool, feeding the paper into the machine by hand, sheet after sheet, and recovering it by hand, sheet after sheet, once it had gone through the press! The composition of the text was done letter by letter, using the old linocut system, mounted onto blocks. When all the pages were finally printed, he put them on the ground in piles, in a semicircle and crouching down in the middle, he collated the whole lot by hand. It was here and in these conditions that the "Patrika" was produced! "Where there's a will, there's a way" as the saying

goes. The "Patrika" being, for those who do not know, and with apologies to those who already do, the first and only Sahaj Marg Magazine produced at that time.

As a number of public seminars were planned to try and get people interested in the Sahaj Marg in Switzerland, we had brought Super-8 material with us to make a film about Babuji. When we asked Babuji if he would agree to being filmed, he gave a sort of weak smile of agreement, as the poor man had already been through a similar ordeal with our Danish brothers and sisters. The days were passing and we were beginning to get a bit worried in case Babuji had forgotten his promise about letting himself be filmed.

One day when I was busy sewing the banner with Solvejg in Allen's room, Roland dashed in and said that Babuji had put on his best shirt and seemed to be ready to be filmed. So Roland got everything ready and Master read the message he had written for the celebration of his 75th birthday. He read it in a strong clear voice and it came out very well because it was sometimes a bit difficult to make out what Master was saying. He then spoke at random about different aspects of the Sahaj Marg and spirituality in general as follows:

"This constant remembrance solves everything. I will tell you how it is done. You think of God, just rest your thought on God and then you do your work. Very easy it is!" To a question about Christianity he replied: "Christ's teachings were very good. With more and more people coming from the west I got Christ's

permission to work among Christians." When speaking about astrology Babuji said an astrologer had made a prediction to him once: "He said I will be run over by a car. I have no idea about myself, my body, anything. Everything is lost. Kasturi said: 'A thing like this can never happen. God is not daft. If Babuji is looking after God's work, then God has to look after Babuji.'" After which Babuji gave one of his unique chuckles, that seemed to bubble up from inside him, while his eyes sparkled with mirth. He would then look amazingly boyish, in spite of his venerable age. As the subject of astrology has been referred to, Babuji had his Ascendant in the Gemini which explains this light-hearted boyish side of his nature.

Babuji was trying to tell us something about Reality and said: "Really speaking, Reality is felt and not expressed. There is a word *darshan*. *Darshan* means illustrated. An illustrated being." As we were too stupid to grasp what he meant, he went on to try and make us understand. "Look, suppose you take a photograph. If I am in a photograph, I am an illustrated being. I become illustrated. When a man is in a rage, he is illustrating anger." Solvejg said: "I understand the words but not the meaning." She added: "I would like to be an illustration of Reality." "Thank you very much" said Babuji. Knowing that we still had not understood what he meant, he went on to say: "God is very subtle. It is we who have made God, giving him so many qualities. He cannot be seen, he can only be felt. He shines out from every brick, every corner. It is a question of sensitivity. Although people in the west are very sensitive. Very sensitive they are!" Babuji told us that there is something like an open ring in the heart region.

When we are born, the ring is completely open. According as the years pass, the ring closes little by little and it is possible to see the life span left to a person from the size of the opening in the ring.

In reply to several questions we asked about the value of other spiritual systems, and the Gurus who were professing them, Babuji said: "They are doing good. In their own way they are doing good." He never said anything bad about anybody, or criticised another system or religion. Time and time again we heard abhyasis bewailing the years they had lost practising other systems before finding the Sahaj Marg. Time and time again Babuji would say: "You should not regret the time you gave to that system. Your samskaras drew you there. Certainly you have learnt something there. Nothing is ever lost. Now you have come here but be grateful for what you have received elsewhere." Babuji was very generous in his appreciation of other *sansthas* and more often than not reconciled people with the religion or faith they had been brought up in. To this I can attest, having learnt to understand Christianity better through the Sahaj Marg, and having learnt to love Christ through Ram Chandra.

Each sentence was punctuated by a graceful movement of the hand, rather like a mudra, and accompanied by the gurgling sound of his water-pipe, as he puffed on his hookah. The leaves he smoked left a fragrance floating in the air that was characteristic of "Babuji" and when we think of him, sometimes this fragrance seems to be there. As you listened and watched, that lovely old man wormed his way into your heart and you were hooked. Then he, like the "Illustrated Being" he was trying to tell us about, became all pervasive,

shining out from every leaf on the tree, every drop of dew on the grass, he was the ray from the sun. With one of his delightful quips, Babuji would correct what has just been written saying: "Light is but the shadow of Reality."

Another sort of reality was looming ahead of us, the dreaded moment of our departure. Babuji asked to see our train tickets and told a local abhyasi to put us in the "bogey" that was added onto the train in Shahjahanpur. Then we would be sure to find seats he said. He took such care of us in every way, that in spite of his frailty one had an impression of strength, of having at last found somebody that can be counted on, that is sure, and this engendered faith and trust. With heavy hearts we packed up our suitcases, brought everything down and went in to say good-bye to Babuji. At least that was our, my intention. Blinded by tears and shaking with sobs, I just could not say anything. Feeling ashamed of this display of emotion I went out again and was scolded by Roland: "You should go back in and thank Master for all his kindness. What will he think of us?" I gave my nose a good blow and tried once again. I just sat beside Babuji, near his cushion-seat and did not say anything. He turned towards me and looking sorrowful said: "When will you be coming back?" Well, that finished me. That he should feel sorry to see such a low and gross creature leaving him was the manifestation of a tremendous love and compassion that was already overwhelming in itself. But that he should want to know when that same low and gross creature would be coming back, was a unique gift of love, to be treasured like a precious thing forever after.

Fortunately for us, we did not know that it would be three long years before we would be able

to come back to Shahjahanpur. It was also fortunate that we did not know that we had just lived very privileged moments because things were never ever to be the same again. In later years everybody had to stay out in Hardoi Road, in the Ashram. No more long and wonderful evenings spent with Babuji on the veranda. Babuji's home was to become the "Paradise Lost", memories of which were to be cherished.

We took leave of this divine hospitality tearfully, but nevertheless buoyant, because Babuji had promised to come and stay with us for a few days the next time he travelled to Europe.

Oh, my beloved one!

*As a swan whose majestic wings unfold
From danger her dear ones to withhold
So on the Perfect One's threshold
Kind words of welcome to us were told.*

*As a swan with white feathers gleaming in the sun
The grace of the Perfect One on our hearts has shone
So that the mire therein may become
Limpid like the waters he swims upon.*

*As a Swan with graceful head bowed low
Watching her young ones flourish and grow
So they who in the meandering stream tarried
By the Perfect One to the main river were carried
Where the swift-flowing current flecked with foam
Finally led them back to their Infinite Home.*

PART TWO

A Promise Fulfilled

During our stay with Babuji Roland had taken a number of photographs. We sent a set of them to Babuji. Some time after that we received a letter from a person called Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, who signed as the General Secretary of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission, asking if we could send a set of the photographs to him too, as they might be useful for illustrating publications of the mission. The photographs had been taken with a very inexpensive amateur's camera and were not really suitable for reproduction in books, as the pictures were not very sharp. We sent a set of the photographs anyway and as we never saw any of them in the mission's publications, we assumed that Mr. Rajagopalachari had come to the same conclusion. This was our first contact with Chari - an epistolary exchange.

We were to exchange other letters about mission affairs and particularly one, scaring the

life out of us, saying that he was reconsidering Master's plans to come to Switzerland as Babuji suffered from car sickness and would not be able to go up twisty mountain roads. I wrote back by return mail in, I'm afraid to say, a rather offhand flippant way, to the effect that we did not live in a chalet, hanging over a cliff, up in the hills, and that there were very straight, modern motorways the whole way between the airport and where we lived at that time. From Chari's reply it was obvious that he was very peeved by my letter, saying that if I had not personally experienced seeing Babuji get sick after travelling by car I could not possibly appreciate the situation but that in view of the fact that the roads were suitable, Switzerland would be maintained in the tour programme. I just thought: "Oh, how touchy he is" and let it go.

Babuji was supposed to have come in September 1975 but due to a serious illness, his visit was postponed until May 1976. The day of his arrival came at long last and we set off to the airport with joy and longing in our hearts. Reading the accounts of Babuji's first trip abroad in Chari's book "India in the West" had been a helpful guideline in planning Master's stay. As is the custom in the East, we thought we would have a garland made with which to greet Babuji at the airport. We were not quite sure what the custom was exactly. Whether the garland was a way of saying welcome, or if it was in honour of what Babuji represented. So as not to offend anybody, we had two made, one for Babuji and one for Chari. When we picked them up at the florist's they looked more like wreaths than garlands.

Babuji's flight was a little late getting in, but finally there he was, accompanied by a very

tall man whom we supposed was Chari. The first time I saw Chari I was amazed at how western he looked, and at how pointed and western his nose seemed from the right side, with its finely chiselled nostril, and how completely Indian it was from the other side. In fact, Chari's nose sums up in itself the harmonious blending of two completely different cultures. This first impression was taken in a flash, whilst we stood there with the garlands. Putting one around Babuji's neck was no problem but we were a bit dismayed by Chari's height, wondering how on earth we were going to reach up there to put one around his neck, unless he obligingly bent down. The problem solved itself because Chari would not accept the garland and put his around Babuji's neck too. The garlands were quite heavy and garnished with so many flowers that only the tip of poor Babuji's nose and his hat, emerged from the profusion of flowers.

When we had finished introducing everybody to Babuji, and after a little rest to let him recover, we relieved him of the staggering weight of the garlands and set off towards the car to take him to Etoy. We had had a rubber static electricity grounder fitted onto the chassis of the car, hoping that it would prevent Babuji from getting sick. As an added precaution we had bought a medallion containing some sort of salt that was supposed to absorb any static electricity. It had been recommended to parents for their children by the Swiss Touring Club, so we thought we might try it on Babuji. Babuji accepted the medallion, saying that he would put it on later, if he felt unbearably sick. We explained that he should put it on half an hour before travelling, wear it during the whole journey, and keep it on for another half hour once the journey was over. While we were explaining all this to Babuji it

seemed to trigger off Chari's memory who still seemed peeved about the letter I had written to him. With his western profile turned towards me he started scolding me all over again, making his western nostril look indignantly pinched and his nose even more pointed. All the while I was thinking: "My goodness, what a prickly Leo pride we have here!"

During the run back to Etoy Babuji wanted a little air. He wound the window down a little, took a look at us to make sure that our respective hair styles were not being blown to pieces, and finally wound it up again, leaving just a chink open at the top. He was so polite, so considerate and thoughtful. We showed him the ventilator right in front of him but he seemed a bit suspicious about such a modern invention and preferred his little chink in the window. We finally reached Etoy without Master getting sick, so the medallion seemed to be quite effective after all.

Babuji asked if we could show him around the house which we did immediately. When he saw Roland's office he felt at home at once because they both had the same filing system! We showed Babuji and Chari up to their rooms. Babuji was in our only guest room and we had prepared our son's room for Chari. When Chari saw that we had put him in a separate room, he said this would not do at all because if Babuji had to get up during the night to go to the bathroom, he was sometimes totally confused, did not know where he was, and might hurt himself. After which he picked up the mattress and the bedding, carried the whole thing into Babuji's room and dumped it on the floor! This was all said and done in a very congenial manner and on getting to know Chari better we could see that he was an awfully nice fellow really.

We showed him where things were kept in the house, where the charcoal for Babuji's hookah was, where the glasses were for Babuji's glass of milk. Babuji suffered from hyper-acidity and had ulcers, and cold milk helped to relieve the pain. Chari took it all in very quickly and immediately busied himself setting up Babuji's hookah on the terrace. We had installed a comfortable easy chair there for Babuji, trying to re-create the Shahjahanpur atmosphere in Etoy, so that Babuji would not have the impression of being a guest, but the host welcoming visitors to his home. Babuji must have felt this because when he came down he said: "This is my house!" It certainly was and we were very happy that he should feel that way.

By this time quite a number of abhyasis had arrived and were already sitting around Babuji on the terrace. A group of Swiss abhyasis, Roland and myself rushed around getting lunch ready. As the weather was fine we were fortunately able to serve it in the garden where we had installed tables and chairs. We had put strawberries on the menu for the dessert, as we had heard it was a fruit Babuji liked very much. In fact he used to recommend strawberries to everybody, saying that they were very good for the health.

Master went to rest, and more and more abhyasis arrived from different centres. We were very happy to meet abhyasis we had read about in Chari's book "India in the West". Babuji came down again after a while and we all went out onto the terrace where Chari had lit another hookah. A shower of rain finally chased us all indoors and we just sat around Babuji in silence as he worked on us. Babuji stayed downstairs with us for almost the whole day, it was really a treat.

The rain showed no sign of relinquishing and we were beginning to get a little worried about how we would serve the evening meal, as obviously we were not going to be able to use the installation we had made in the garden. So many people had turned up without saying that they were coming we had to prolong our menu of mushrooms (another one of Babuji's favourites) by serving cheese (the French sort) that we had quite a large stock of, having heard that Babuji liked it very much and, as people had brought all sorts of cakes, we ended the meal with that. Finally it was time for people to leave and we all went to bed.

The next morning we heard somebody moving about very early and Roland got up to see what was happening. He came back and said that Chari was up. I opened one eye and looked at the clock, it was only five o'clock! We were to learn that chari was a very early riser. Still half asleep we stumbled out of bed and started to get ready.

I had often wondered how it is possible to have a little privacy in Indian families, where several generations live under the same roof, in sometimes a rather confined space. I got the answer to this question when Babuji and Chari were staying with us in Etoy. To go from our room to the bathroom we had to pass in front of Babuji's and Chari's rooms. Being sociable people, they usually left their doors open. However, in the morning, when we got up, their doors were always closed, so that we could cross over to the bathroom without feeling embarrassed. We felt quite a glow of affection and gratitude for the courtesy of the two perfect gentlemen who were behind the closed doors we passed in front of.

Chari, who was always up at cockcrow, used our son's room as an office to write up the notes for the book he was to produce, giving an account of Babuji's journey. When he heard us moving about downstairs he left off writing and came down to join us. The weather was grey and drizzly, and Chari seemed to be missing his Indian sun. I asked him if he would like to put on some music. He picked out a record and put it on and started whistling happily to the strains of George Zamfir's Pan flute! Two German-Swiss abhyasis turned up and joined us for breakfast. Chari delighted them by speaking to them in German. For them, to hear German spoken with an Indian accent was as rare as it was quaint.

Roland and myself were sending up mental prayers to Babuji for fine weather. The garden around the house in Ettoy was very big but inside the house space was a bit more restricted. We managed nevertheless because the rain obligingly stopped at lunchtime and started again in the afternoon. Babuji never interfered with the weather. He told us once that he was in a town in India where there had been a serious period of drought. As there was a cloud drifting by he made it rain in that area. Immediately, Lalaji asked him what he was doing, and Babuji explained that he was making it rain in an area where they badly needed water. Lalaji said that the cloud he had used was on its way to a country where it had not rained for six years! After that Babuji decided never to interfere with the weather again, even to oblige abhyasis who were praying for fine weather. The wisdom of it was made obvious to us that very summer because there was severe drought in Europe in 1976. Finally water had to be rationed and we were not allowed to water the garden. The farmers had to go down to the lake to draw water

for watering their crops. In France there was a shortage of mineral water as the production could not keep up with the demand. There were not only forest fires everywhere in Europe that year but also crops being burnt, by fires started in the countryside by people carelessly tossing lit cigarette butts out of their car windows. So we understood afterwards why Babuji had let it rain while it still could.

That evening there was to be a public meeting in Geneva and I locked myself up in Roland's workroom, trying to finish the translation of Chari's speech. From the book "India in the West" I could see that Chari was a brilliant orator, and I was terribly afraid of not being capable of improvising the translation. In those days we did not yet have François Deroulède as the Mission's official translator for public meetings. To try and get around this problem I had written to Chari, asking him to write his lecture in advance and send it on to me so that I could prepare the translation. Prior to Babuji's arrival we had just finished printing Babuji's book "Voice Real" Volume I. That was hardly done when Roland wanted to repaint the whole house so that it would look nice when Babuji came. We had literally just put the paint brushes down before going down to the Airport to meet Babuji. So in fact I had had very little time to work on the translation, and the last page remained to be done! I finished it just in time, typed it and while an abhyasi drove my car for me to Geneva, on the way down I marked the breaks where Chari was to pause in the English version to let me read the French version. I was very sorry that Chari's natural eloquence should be hampered by my limitations but the speech he wrote: "The need for need" was so beautiful, it did not lose any of its impact on the public in spite of

the way it was presented. When Chari brought out his book "Sahaj Marg in Europe" he very gallantly spoke about a "simultaneous translation" but here you have the behind-the-scenes' truth.

The first two days passed in a flash. Babuji was in good form and spirits, although he was having a little trouble with his intestines. He passed a lot of time downstairs with us all and took his meals with us also, if one could call what Babuji used to eat a meal. The birds who came to eat on the windowsill of our kitchen ate more than Babuji.

By this time there was a beautiful atmosphere in the house of softly subtle Divine Grace, the effect of which could be seen on the human level, in the fraternal and harmonious relations that had sprung up between abhyasis of all nationalities, from all walks of life and many of whom, until this gathering, had not known each other. Everything went smoothly and, spontaneously, a rotatory shift system was put into place so that the small Swiss team which had been spending most of its time in the kitchen was relieved one day by the French girls, another by the Italians, then by the Germans and so on. We stuck a list of the menus up in the kitchen and all the ingredients could be found in the garage which had been transformed into a storeroom for the duration of Babuji's stay.

While Babuji was upstairs in his room either working or resting, the abhyasis spent their time either giving or taking sittings, or helping each other to learn each other's language. A Canadian abhyasi was helping a Swiss abhyasi with her English homework, a German abhyasi was listening to and correcting the pronunciation of

another abhyasi who was learning a German vocabulary. Others sat out in the garden, in between showers. Babuji came out to the garden too sometimes, saying: "I feel free." He seemed to like the colour red because each time he passed in front of a red geranium on his way down to the garden, he glanced at it fondly and stopped for a few seconds to admire it. He also liked the two immense chestnut trees that were in flower at that time of the year. One had pink blossoms and the other white blossoms. Babuji asked us to bring over some seeds the next time we came to India so that he could grow chestnut trees in the grounds of the Ashram in Shahjahanpur. It breaks my heart when I think of all the trouble he took to build that place, of how much he put into it, in homage to his beloved Lalaji, and now it is left to crumble down, derelict.

The house was becoming a garden too, as each day the abhyasis brought beautiful bouquets of flowers to Babuji. All our vases were occupied and we had to use empty jam pots and fruit juice bottles to put all those flowers in.

Time seemed to stand still, and how nice it would have been to give up everyday life and live like that all the time! However, Babuji did not want any social dropouts in the mission and directed us to fly on both wings, that of spiritual life and that of material life.

Chari had become part of the family and, inside the rather incommodious exterior he had shown in the beginning, we discovered a kind, good-natured brother who was so unshockable that you could say practically anything to him. He was so natural and uncomplicated about Babuji's physical miseries that it pulled Babuji out of

himself and he could not do anything else but laugh. Nobody but Chari would have dared to speak to Babuji the way he did, he was so unceremonious and down-to-earth, but it acted like a tonic on Babuji who responded like a fond father to a rather outspoken son.

Chari used to take Babuji into the bathroom for his shower, mostly so that Babuji would not either scald or freeze himself with the hot or cold water. He was not used to the mixers we have in Europe, where you have to dose just the right amount of hot and cold water so that it comes out at the right temperature. The tales Chari told us about Babuji's shower were hilarious. Babuji was so shy he would not even let Chari see him undressed. So Chari had to turn his back until Babuji had hidden himself behind the shower curtain, then with Babuji clutching the shower curtain around himself, Chari turned the taps on and mixed the hot and cold water to the right temperature. When Babuji had finished showering himself, Chari passed Babuji his towel, around the shower curtain, and then and only then would he emerge to let Chari towel him dry.

Getting Babuji ready for his bath was quite a ritual. Rubbing oil all over him because he had a problem with dry skin, all the while talking away about God knows what because, as it would not have been seemly for a woman to go in there, I could only look on with longing from the corridor, feeling very excluded from this warmhearted male companionship, as Babuji, Chari and Don (who was acting as Babuji's nurse during this whole trip) sat around in a circle, on the ground, like in India, except that it looked very funny transposed to this setting, on the highly varnished parquet floor in this very European bedroom.

Chari did absolutely everything for Babuji, much in the same way as Jackie Baroukh takes care of Chari nowadays, except that Babuji was so helpless, so lost, so nineteenth century. You could find Chari acting as a barber giving Babuji a haircut, or trimming his beard. One evening, when I entered Babuji's room to take something in to him, there was Chari with a beaming smile scrubbing Babuji's "dentures" with a king-sized nailbrush, looking just like a shoeshiner! He is a man of many talents.

For newcomers to the Mission who see Chari as he is to-day, smiling, cheerful, but seemingly a little aloof because he has to keep a certain distance to be able to do his work impartially, it may be hard to realise that there was another Chari, a householder who did not think it beneath him to dirty his hands or tackle a hard job. How many people would like to hold someone else's teeth in their hands, even if they were from a divine mouth, and scrub them? Chari did all this, and with his usual good humour. He always sees the funny side of a situation, making menial tasks seem lighter and less thankless, for himself and for others.

Chari loves electric gadgets. One day when I was hoovering the house he wanted to have a try. Well, he hoovered absolutely everything; the carpets, the furniture, the walls, with such enthusiasm you could see he was born to be a human vacuum cleaner, as Babuji used to put it. Although we did not know that Chari had been earmarked for becoming Babuji's successor. He was a more thorough housekeeper than I, and all the spiders scuttled off to safety in the remotest chinks of the wall and did not dare come out again until Chari had left. At that time we did not

realise that we were living a unique experience, a unique privilege, that of housing not only the Master but also the Master to be.

An international preceptors' and organisers' meeting had been arranged at Babuji's request, and it was to take place in Morges on the morning of the third day of his stay in Switzerland. The purpose of the meeting was to form a European Council which was to organise the Mission's work according to the directives and policies of the SRCM Headquarters. There was a lot of resistance to certain aspects of these directives which were felt to be an institutionalisation of the Mission. Even the term "Mission" was rejected by people who had left Christian religions in search of a spiritual path more in line with the goal they wished to attain. The name of the Mission itself was not being used in many countries precisely because it included the word "Mission", people preferring Sahaj Marg - Switzerland (I plead guilty), Sahaj Marg - France, Sahaj Marg - Germany and so on. It was discovered that in fact, the only country that used the correct name of the Mission was Denmark. Babuji did not want this at all and insisted that he had founded the Mission in honour of his beloved Master, and that the Mission could not have a different name in each country. Then the term "Ten Commandments" was contested by many, for the same reasons and of course, the term "prayer" was also brought up. All this may seem strange nowadays because since then, churches have become emptier and emptier and no longer have the all-powerful hold they once had over society. The new generation of Sahaj Margis may not have undergone the strict religious upbringing of the older generation which led to this violent reaction and rejection of terms that recalled the Christian background from which

they had come. The non-acceptance was such, because of the terminology and not the content, that it was felt that these components of the practice should not be spoken of when introducing new abhyasis, until such time as they were considered well established enough as abhyasis to be able to cope with such Christian-sounding terms. Historically this is interesting because in the Mission to-day there is really no problem about this. In any case, as always with Babuji, differences were smoothed out and a general goodwill on the part of the participants was mustered to conform to the directives of our beloved Babuji who won our hearts and our heads.

After the meeting, we all had lunch together and then went back to Etoy where there was to be open house for the rest of the day, plus the day after. Babuji stayed downstairs with us all the time. The evening *satsangh* with him was so sublime that it was almost unbearable, and many people were weeping from the sheer beauty of it. After the evening meal we showed Babuji the film Roland had made in Shahjahanpur, and he seemed quite touched by the experience of seeing himself as we see him, through our eyes. That whole day was a very special day of unsurpassable divine beauty and all of us, without exception, could not find adequate words to thank Babuji for all he had given us. Reluctantly, people left little by little, allowing us to go to bed after a very eventful day.

The next day Babuji was having problems with his intestines again and kept to his room most of the time, although he did come down to be with the people extra-Sahaj Marg who had come to see him, as there was still open house. He went out for a short walk in the garden but had his meals by himself in his room. The abhyasis left

quite late as Babuji was to leave for France the next day.

As Babuji wanted to take a bath I took up a body lotion for dry skin. He said he would try it and started rubbing it into his skin. I explained that it was to be used after his bath to replace the natural moisture he had just washed out of his skin with the harsh soap and water. He seemed very puzzled by the idea of putting the lotion on after his bath and thought he would be sticky all over. We explained that no, it was specially prepared to be absorbed by the skin, leaving it soft and fragrant. He bobbed his head in his Indian way, not looking very convinced.

Babuji did a lot of his spiritual work at night and his room late in the evening was like a powerhouse. There were such strong vibrations and so much transmission I felt dizzy and had to leave the room while I could still walk. I wondered how Chari who slept in there, was able to manage. Little did I know what his destiny was to be!

As it was Babuji's last day with us, during the afternoon Roland had asked Babuji if he would not mind signing our distinguished guests' book. Babuji was sitting in an easy chair in the living-room. In one beautiful fluid and graceful movement he flowed from his seat to the floor to sign the book. He obviously felt more at ease writing at ground level, being used to a ground-level desk in his own office. It was amazing how supple Babuji was for a person of his age. He could contort himself into any position sitting on couches or cushions, and always look graceful. There was a natural elegance about his movements, and his joints had kept their youthful flexibility. All except one that is, in the lumbar

region of his spinal column. He sometimes had trouble in getting out of the car because of this and preferred to develop his own technique for getting around the problem, rather than accept the dozens of arms that were held out to him to help him out. After all, he was young at heart and maybe we made him feel old by wanting to help him. He managed beautifully by simultaneously pivoting around in the car seat and swinging his legs out through the doorway, then with his feet firmly planted on the ground he put his hands on his knees and stood up. Then using his arms as a lever, after a few seconds to gather up his strength, he quickly unfolded into an upright position, with just a little clicking sound in his backbone. If it was possible to catch Babuji out in any little vanity, it was in this point of honour he had about extricating himself from cars by his own means.

Before leaving the subject of the distinguished guests' book, Chari left us the following message dated 22nd May, 1976: "When the ground is prepared, Master plants a seed, a seed of Divine possibilities, and when we water that seed with the unending flow of our love, lo, a Divine bloom of sublime beauty and purity unfolds in the being, and the sower and the sown become one!" And then he says that he has not got the poetic strain - how modest can one be?

Chari had already packed up the suitcases next morning as they were to leave by Air France for Nice. Then there came about one of these Divine blessings in disguise which changed Babuji's plans at the last minute. In disguise, because for our French brothers and sisters it was a disappointment, but for us it was a Divine gift.

Babuji was not feeling well and postponed his departure for a few days. Most of the overseas abhyasis had already gone and there was just a handful of people left. Babuji told me that he had had a vision of his journey before he came over to Europe, and he knew he was going to be sick. We were so happy that he chose to be sick in our house. Although sick is not really the word because in fact Babuji was merely constipated. So many silly things were said at the time about Babuji's "illness". He had been suffering from constipation all through his journey, and in each country, including Switzerland, he had been given laxative pills. We had our family doctor in to take a look at Babuji and he said that the change of food, plus the fact that he did not eat enough, had constipated him, that there was now a very hard stool which was difficult to pass and that all the laxative pills he had taken had inflamed his intestines. So there is the diagnostic in very plain terms, with apologies to those who think it is indelicate, but it seemed a good occasion to rectify an "historical" error. Babuji asked what the doctor's "finding" was and on hearing it, confirmed that it was quite correct. The doctor wanted to give Babuji an enema but Babuji would not hear of it, so he prescribed something that was very effective but telling Babuji all the same that he should eat more because his intestines would never function properly with such a small intake of food.

To try and encourage him to eat a little more we took his tray up to him and sat with him while he had his meal, persuading him to try the different dishes. Babuji would take about a teaspoonful of each dish and ask for another plate to put the rest on, so that it would not be wasted! He did this for each dish so, to save our feet, we

would take up a pile of extra plates on which to put all the little bits Babuji did not want wasted. Babuji was very economical and one day, pointing to a folded paper napkin on his tray, he asked me what it was. When I had explained he was horrified, saying: "You mean to say that you use it only once and then throw it away?" I said: "Yes, it's a disposable napkin." Babuji got up, went over to the washbasin, took his bath towel, came back to his little table and draped the bath towel daintily over his knees! Handing me the paper napkin he said: "I have not soiled it, so it need not be wasted. Nothing should be wasted." He made me promise that I would not throw it out.

Brother Don Sabourin asked me if I would not mind ringing up the Air Company to change the reservations. It was of course no problem and I started off by changing Babuji's booking. The name Ram Chandra was easy enough, as was Don and Jacqueline Sabourin's. When we came to Chari's, it got a little more difficult and I had to spell it out for the reservations' clerk: P for Patrick, A for Anna R for Robert... By the time I got to the 28th letter of Chari's name I could feel that the poor fellow on the other end of the line was getting exhausted. When I finally came to Mr. Saravanamuttu's name he thought I was making fun of him and started to get annoyed. Fortunately, it was the last name on the list. We went up to let Babuji and Chari know that everything was okay and found Chari unpacking the suitcases again, putting poor Babuji's trousers and jackets under his mattress which was on the floor, to keep the creases in! Typically masculine!

It was beautiful having Babuji in the house with so few people around. We had been so busy catering for the visiting abhyasis that we had seen

relatively little of Babuji, even though he was staying with us. We could go and sit with him in his room or talk to him if he seemed in that sort of a mood. If he was not, he had a very original way of letting us know it. He flopped back onto his pillows and pulled the eiderdown over his head. Then he pedalled with his feet a little until he caught his toe in the seam of the eiderdown so as to be able to pull it down a bit to let his nose out. From that we were supposed to understand that he had had enough of us. So we would get up and leave, saying: "Okay Babuji, we can take a hint."

One morning Roland asked Chari if he would like to go out on the lake on a boat. Chari seemed interested in the idea and asked how long it would take. As it was quite long he said: "What about the old man?" I said: "How irreverent." "Can't you hear the affection that is there?" asked Chari. Of course we could, we had witnessed so many scenes of Chari's loving affection for Babuji but the most beautiful of all, that will remain engraved in my memory forever, is that of Chari helping Babuji come down the stairs after his illness, when he was still a little weak. The stairway in Etoy was quite steep, with hard stone steps and no handrail. There was just a rope on one wall, more for decorative purposes than anything else. Babuji was coming down the stairs with Chari just one step above him and bending over, Chari clasped Babuji in his arms like a precious bundle, to prevent him from falling and hurting himself. They came down like that, step after step. Who would have thought such a great big giant of a man capable of such gentleness, of such tenderness? What son could have given more loving care to his father? What son indeed but a spiritual son?

France 1976

Our main pursuit in the Sahaj Marg is the elimination of our samskaras and to avoid creating new ones. As such the past should be left in the past. To cut a very long story short, it could just be said that the word "hospitality" in the dictionary of Babuji's host in France probably had a different definition than in other dictionaries.

Chari, very fortunately for us, forgot to pack the tube of Babuji's hookah in with their luggage. So it acted as our "laissez-passer" and we were able to get in to see Babuji. Don and Jacqueline who had not been able to get in, although they had come to Europe to be Babuji's nurses throughout his trip, came with us - to help us carry the tube of course! The person who writes these lines shamefacedly admits that she kept the tube of Babuji's hookah under her pillow until it was time to leave for France. Finally, we arrived with two tubes because the mouthpiece of Babuji's tube

always seemed very big and clumsy to Roland, so he made another more dainty one. Then he fixed it onto a transparent tube, thinking it might amuse Babuji to watch the smoke go up and down the tube. He had coiled the tube carefully and fastened it with a piece of ribbon. There are so many ways of showing one's love and affection - that was Roland's!

When we arrived Babuji was sitting up in bed and Chari was busy writing and filing papers. People have often wondered how Chari gets through so much work. Chari said once that it is because he always tackles the most difficult file first, then the rest seems easy and is quickly done. What happens when all the files are difficult is a question we could ask him. To come back to the point, from what I have been able to observe, I think his efficiency also comes from the fact that he does things immediately. No procrastination! He gets a letter, he replies the same day, or as soon as possible and immediately puts the letter in a file. He does not let his paperwork pile up. In fact, Chari does things so quickly, if we ask him for something or to do something, it is better to be sure that we really want it because he does it so quickly we do not get time to change our minds.

We talked to Babuji in his room for a while and then Chari went down to set up his hookah for him on the covered terrace downstairs. We all went down and Babuji was in a very talkative mood and seemed to be happy to have some visitors.

We did not see very much of him after that, just now and again for *satsangh*. One day he managed to escape and we all had lunch in a

crêperie. It was really fun and we were very happy for our French brothers and sisters, that they could spend some time with their Master. We went back to Switzerland soon after that and although it had not been planned I decided I would go to Denmark.

Copenhagen 1976

There is something special about Denmark, particularly Copenhagen. Maybe it is the love and total devotion the abhyasis there have for Babuji that makes it that way. On the way to Shahjahanpur, when returning to see Babuji, I always felt I was going home. On the way to Copenhagen, to meet Babuji there, I had the same feeling. At that time the biggest group of abhyasis in Europe was in Denmark. Since then, of course, the Mission has grown all over Europe and the largest group is now in France. However, at that time it was refreshing and a joyful experience to be in a country which was ready to receive what Master had to give. There were about one hundred and fifty abhyasis. By to-day's standards, this does not seem to be a very big number but in those "pioneering" days, to be amidst one hundred and fifty enthusiastic and loving abhyasis was a heartwarming experience.

Babuji was staying with Mikala Erstad and Palle Kousgaard in a lovely old house in the Copenhagen suburbs in Hellerup. The weather was sunny and balmy. The entrance to the house was through a gate that led into a courtyard and then through the back door of the house. There was an ocean of shoes in the hall. Everything was painted with bright primary colours. To one side there was a big room with French windows that led onto the garden. The abhyasis sat in there in between sittings and in between seeing Babuji. As the abhyasis were generally young in Denmark, there was an incredible number of small children and babies.

Babuji was staying in a big room where everything was painted white, even the grand piano. Nowadays, it is fashionable to have everything white but in 1976 it was original and created a nice atmosphere of purity and simplicity. Babuji's bed was in one corner of the room near the window and there was a bed for Chari at the other end of the room near the door. Opposite Babuji's bed there was a double glass door which opened onto another, bigger room where the individual sittings were held. The door near Chari's bed opened onto a big main hallway. It was ideal because Babuji could conduct *satsangh* from his bed and with all the doors open, it created a vast space where all the abhyasis could sit for meditation.

The Danes had had a circular plexiglass protection cut for Babuji so that he could smoke his hookah without having to worry about spoiling the carpet. The most outstanding feature of their arrangements for Babuji was the wooden encasement they had built around the toilet, so

that Babuji who was used to Turkish-style toilets, would not fall off and hurt himself, as he did in his 1972 tour. This attentiveness to detail showed the depth of their love for Babuji. It was not surprising then when Babuji announced that Divine Grace was showering down on the house. He said that he usually had to bring it down himself but here the love of the abhyasis was such, the grace was coming down by itself.

Babuji had rest periods but people would slip into his room, first one, then another. When the room was finally full up, the glass doors seemed to open miraculously, revealing the adjoining room full of abhyasis longing to be with their Master. Babuji was irresistible. He also enjoyed having the abhyasis around him in spite of the fact that he needed rest. One evening when we were told that really Babuji must rest and nobody should go into his room, a lot of us were talking together in the main hallway. Chari was telling us a funny story and we were all laughing hilariously. Out came Babuji in his bare feet and with his eyes sparkling he wanted to know what "devilment" was going on. He then joined in the fun and told us a few stories himself.

There were quite often musical interludes with Leela, an Indian lady living in Copenhagen, singing devotional songs in her beautiful strong voice. Then Marianne used to sing and play her guitar for us. She composed the songs herself and the words were very spiritual and written specially for Babuji. Speaking of music, Babuji said that Chari plays the flute very well and I took mental note of the fact, hoping that we would hear him play sometime.

The opportunity came very soon, in fact the very next day. We were having lunch in the kitchen and there, on an overhead shelf, was a wooden flute. We handed it to Chari and told him we would like to hear him play. Well, he blew into the flute and produced two or three very out-of-tune notes and said: "Well there, you have heard me." As it was not a very convincing performance to say the least of it, we thought his talents must lie elsewhere. Little did we know!

Don and Jackie Sabourin had been to Greenland and showed Babuji some slides and photographs of the fauna there. Babuji had never seen pictures of animals like reindeer, polar bears, seals etc. and it struck his imagination so much he mentioned that it would be interesting to see these animals. The Danish abhyasis said that there were a few specimen in the Copenhagen Zoo. Apparently, the next morning Babuji surprised Chari by jumping out of bed and saying that he wanted to go to the Zoo to see the polar bears. When I turned up for *satsangh* at the usual hour, everybody had already left for the Zoological Gardens. I was sorry to have missed the fun but with Babuji you never knew what to expect.

Babuji was to return to India the next day and I left by train from Copenhagen that evening. Leaving Babuji was a terrible thing. Of course, we took him away in our hearts. That is what one keeps saying to oneself to try to keep from crying. But the heart, even if it is becoming spiritualised thanks to Babuji, is still human and would not heed any rational words that one might say to oneself. The train journey from Copenhagen to Switzerland was worse than from Shahjahanpur to Delhi, and it was not always easy to find a corner

to weep in, so as to avoid the surprised gaze of the other passengers.

Oh, my Beloved Master!

*May time pass ever faster
So as to be with you once again
And thus relieve the pain
Of separation difficult to bear
And which this poor heart dost tear.*

PART THREE

Growing Pains

We were not to see Babuji again until February 1978. Roland had a very bad heart attack in October 1976, putting an end to our plans of returning to Shahjahanpur in the winter of that year. The French version of "My Master" was also being produced and it seemed important to bring it out as soon as possible. As Roland's doctor would not hear of letting him undertake a journey to India I could not bear it any longer and went to see Babuji with another abhyasi.

Although the Ashram in HarDOI Road had been completed in the meantime we planned our visit so as to arrive just after the Basant Panchami, when everybody had left and just before any more visitors were expected. We hoped that maybe in this way it might be possible to stay with Babuji in his house.

In the train we met a doctor from Shahjahanpur who knew Babuji and could not understand why we had come from so far just to see him and why we wanted to stay in "that old house" so badly when there was "a nice modern building" out of town. We explained that we had not come for the building. I wonder if it is the same doctor Thomas Mogensen referred to in his book "In the light of His light". He decided he would accompany us to Babuji's place to pay his respects and seemed curious to see if he could see what we saw in him. Apparently not, because after about ten minutes he left and never came back again but leaving us his card in case we got sick and needed his services.

While he was talking to Babuji we saw with sinking hearts that our suitcases had been put into the rickshaw again. Babuji seemed adamant, saying that everybody had to go out to the Ashram now and that Mr. and Mrs. Chari were still out there. Well, that cheered us up a bit but we left Babuji's house, nevertheless, with lead in our hearts, feeling totally rejected and I for one had trouble in holding back tears. Mr. Gunde Rao instructed the rickshaw cyclist as to where we should be taken and the way out seemed much longer than the last time I had visited the Ashram. We finally stopped in front of a building with a soldier standing to attention with a rifle over his shoulder. We thought the rickshaw man had taken us to the wrong place, although the crescent-shaped adornments on the main building seemed familiar. On looking in through the gates we saw a reproduction of the Mission's emblem and, reassured that we had not been taken to a military barracks by mistake, we entered into the Ashram grounds.

The first person I saw was Sulochana, although I did not know her at the time, not having met her before. Whether it was intuition on her part or whether Babuji had inspired her I do not know but unconsciously she did just the right thing. She said: "You must be Stella" and gave me a great big motherly hug. Sulochana probably does not know it but she saved my life that day because I was on the verge of disgracing myself by breaking down and crying from the shock of it all. That horrible soldier standing there with a gun. Having been literally put out of Babuji's house. It had been a tough day.

The next person to enter the scene was Chari. Well, if he had surprised me the first time by his westernness, this time I was taken aback by his easternness. There was Chari, whom I had seen dressed in a suit, shirt and tie, garbed in a dhoti with the most incredible hat you have ever seen. It was not at all the fault of the hat which in fact was a very nice knitted beret, but rather the way he wore it. He did not wear it as the French do, at a jaunty angle, but pulled down over his ears like a tea cosy! He looked so funny I now had trouble in repressing an hysterical giggle. The beret, I was to learn later, was knitted with much love by Babuji's granddaughter, Ninni. Our sister should have given instructions to Chari with the hat, so that he could do justice to it by wearing it at a more becoming angle.

A gentleman called Mr. Krishna took us upstairs and gave us a room and a quilt. Later that evening the abhyasi I had travelled with and myself went for a walk around the grounds and debated whether we would take the next train back to Delhi. We were both very shocked and

disappointed by this "church" that had been built, lost out in the countryside, cut off from the Master. In fact, if there had been any means of transport available, we would have left that very evening. We decided that we hated it there and felt there was nothing else to be done for the time being but go to bed and try to sleep and that we would leave the next day.

Babuji came to the Ashram early next morning and we were all told to come for meditation in the big downstairs dining-room which had become a sort of all-purpose room. Before meditation started there was a ceremony that looked suspiciously like a ritual. A container full of sweet puffed rice was placed on a chair, lit incense sticks were put on the floor to one side of the container, the whole thing was crowned by a portrait of Lalaji and horror of horrors, Babuji sat down in front of the whole installation and seemed to be praying. When Babuji came to, people started fussing around the container of rice and began to distribute grains of it to everybody. I felt as though I were back in a Catholic Church, before an altar, receiving Holy Communion. It was the pit of disillusionment. I exchanged meaningful glances with my travelling companion. Then Babuji who very rarely raised his voice, except when he got mad at Malin, shouted at me: "We will start meditation. May we begin sister Stella?" What else could I do but sink into my chair and try and make myself as inconspicuous as possible? However, there was no anger in his voice, he even looked highly amused and seemed to be having great fun at my expense. After meditation he sat out on the lawn for a while and then went back home, leaving just a handful of people all on their

own. It was awful. At least the soldier had left and taken his rifle with him which was something.

On enquiring about the meaning of the ceremony I was told that I had just assisted at the making of *prasad*. That it was an exception Babuji made because he offered it to Lalaji. It seems that during his lifetime Lalaji particularly liked sweet puffed rice and when he accepted Babuji's offering, Babuji felt an acceleration of his blood circulation in the area of his throat, followed by a swallowing sensation. I was also told that Lalaji had come when Babuji was offering the *prasad*. I was very impressed but hoped that Lalaji had not picked up the thoughts that were going through my mind at that particular moment.

Somebody else explained the presence of the armed soldier, saying that the countryside around Shahjahanpur was full of dacoits and as many westerners attended the Basant Panchami, it might draw their attention. As overseas visitors were generally thought to be rich they might have attacked people in the Ashram. So, in fact, the soldier had been engaged to ensure people's protection during the gathering.

Well, after these successive explanations the situation seemed less dramatic and we decided we would stay on a little longer and give it a try. Later the same day I cornered poor Chari who lent a patient and sympathetic ear while I poured out my tale of woes. He did his best to put my mind at rest about many things, not only concerning the new set-up, but also about events that had cropped up in my personal life since I had seen him last and which had had repercussions on my spiritual

life. However, I was too thoroughly disgruntled for him to be able to get through to me.

The day passed and we got to know the permanent residents of the Ashram a little better. Chari and Sulochana were planning to leave early the next morning. We were going to be quite lonely out here on our own. We were not to see Chari again until 1980 in Copenhagen and Sulochana until 1985 in Vorauf in Germany.

We were informed that we were allowed to go and see Babuji for a while in the morning. So we set off in direction of Shahjahanpur. When we reached Babuji's place we found iron girders, bricks and rubble all over the place. It would seem that Master's youngest son was moving back from Madras to Shahjahanpur and would be living there permanently with his wife and two year old son, Chintu. Master was having an extra bathroom built on the flat roof of his house and having one or two extra rooms added on to the building. We found Babuji himself in a terrible state, trembling from exhaustion. The Basant Panchami celebration drained him of his energy. Babuji often complained that when a mass of people closed in around him, it drained so much of his energy he almost fainted. This always puzzled me because if Babuji received everything from the Source, then it would seem logical that there would be no limit to the energy. For example, when we were sitting with Babuji, official meditation time apart, we were not allowed to close our eyes or meditate and particularly not when he was lying down and he let us stay with him in his room. When we were in his presence we seemed to drain off his physical energy with his Divine energy. On the other hand, what abhyasi,

living at the other end of the terrestrial globe, has not felt the powerful but subtle vibrations of transmission from Babuji no matter where he was? This transmission came from Babuji twenty-four hours a day and did not seem to tire him in the least. It is a phenomenon that has nothing to do with being physically weak or strong because Chari who is a strong man now seems to be affected in the same way. In his beautifully modest way Chari says: "You see, I am learning my job. I could never understand Babuji. After certain sittings we had practically to carry him out of the hall and now the same thing is beginning to happen to me." After certain *satsanghs* Chari can hardly get up from his chair because his legs are so painful and weak they can hardly carry him.

It is rather difficult to understand why this should be. However, if, for the sake of comprehension, one uses the analogy of electricity it becomes a bit clearer. A consumer could not use the thousands and thousands of volts that come directly from a power supply central. The electricity must obligatorily pass through a transformer which sends out the correct voltage for domestic use. However, although the transformer has almost unlimited power at its disposal, if one draws too much energy from the transformer at a time, it overheats and gets damaged because it is limited by its size and power. So there you have a transformer (the Master) linked to a power supply central (an unlimited Source of power) which distributes (who transmits) the correct voltage (dose of *pranahuti*) to the consumer (the abhyasi). According as the Master goes higher and becomes more subtle, his capacity to assimilate power from the Source increases, as does the potential of power that can be drawn from him by us through

his human frame (the transformer). This is, of course, comparing the incomparable but it helps to understand, just a little, this phenomenon of the exhaustion that the Master feels after *satsanghs*. However, it does not clarify why the Master feels this exhaustion only when in the physical presence of abhyasis massed around him and not when he is transmitting to abhyasis at a distance all over the world, twenty-four hours a day. Here another analogy could be used for the sake of comprehension, that of a telecommunications satellite which showers out information all the time in its orbit around the terrestrial globe. However, not all TV sets are tuned in to receive the particular programmes it is emitting, and of the TV sets that are tuned in, not all of them are switched on at the same time. Similarly, the Master showers out *pranahuti* all the time, all over the world but only a small part of the world's population is capable of absorbing it and of those who are capable of absorbing it, they are not all drawing it in at the same time. So there is less strain. By contrast, if the Master has several hundred well-trained abhyasis before him, who have developed their capacity to draw in the maximum *pranahuti* from him it is easy to understand why he feels exhausted in this instance and not in the other.

*
* *

Babuji called us into his office for meditation. Outside the workman was hammering the iron girder to try and straighten it out because it was bent. The mason was smashing up broken bricks to make ballast for the foundations, and Master's son had left the motor of his scooter

running and was trying to make himself heard by shouting over the noise. I should not forget to mention the neighbours who had their radio on full blast. Well, obviously Babuji was teaching us that we should be capable of meditating in all circumstances.

After that Babuji was busy with an accountant who was straightening out the Mission's books. When he had finished he came and said we were expected for lunch out at the Ashram and that we should start back. That was our quota of seeing Babuji for that day! It seems he had started a severe weaning process for "young ones who had been tarrying for too long in the meandering stream." It would also seem that my relationship with Babuji was becoming a bit more bitter-sweet.

We went back to the Ashram dying from frustration. An Indian couple had arrived in the meantime and tried to cheer us up by telling us that, on one occasion, they had come all the way from the south of India to see Babuji. Babuji sent word to them that they were not to come into Shahjahanpur to see him. He also never came out to the Ashram to see them. Far from feeling reassured, our spines were tingling and we hoped that Babuji would not resort to such drastic measures in our case.

The day seemed long and finally we went to bed. In the middle of the night we were woken up by a frightful commotion. We leapt up and went to the balcony to see what it was. It was the night watchman. He was blowing piercing blasts on a whistle like a referee in a football match and banging on the cobblestones with a huge stick. We

asked why on earth he was making such a rumpus. We were told it was to frighten off any dacoits. We said that maybe he was overdoing it a bit as it would not be possible to sleep with a racket like that going on all night. It was agreed that he should ring the bell instead. Every hour he rang that bell!

Between the mosquitos and the bellringing it was not very easy to sleep, so watching the sun rise became a regular appointment. The land around Shahjahanpur is very flat, so you could see this immense red-orange disc, magnified by the morning haze, rise up over the horizon unhampered by any topographical barrier. It was fascinating and impressive and in complete contrast to the game of hide-and-go-seek the sun plays between the peaks of the Alps. In Switzerland the sun rises up behind the mountain ranges very suddenly and disappears with the same abruptness. In Shahjahanpur it was possible to see it develop slowly, in all its splendour.

With sun-up arrived a flock of crows that wheeled and squalled over a tilled field just behind the Ashram. They were amazingly big, much bigger than the race of crows we know over here. If perchance you had not heard the bell (very unlikely) for morning meditation, then you could count on the crows to wake you up. There were quite a lot of exotic birds in or around the Ashram grounds and their colourful plumage was a delight to see. Not knowing much about ornithology I am unable to say to which species they belonged.

After meditation Mr. and Mrs. Rao made tea for us. At first they always gave me the sugary brew that you can almost stand your spoon up in,

there being so much sugar in it. As attentive hosts they noticed that I did not drink it. So Mrs. Rao used to make "without-sugar-tea" for me. What a nuisance I was. Mrs. Rao was surprised that I should drink tea without sugar but the explanation is very simple. After World War II sugar was rationed in our part of the world for a very long time and as children we were not used to sweetening our beverages. So it is just a habit born of necessity.

The permanent residents at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Rao as managers and Mr. Krishna as accountant. Mr. and Mrs. Rao were delightful people and perfect for the job. They were like honey inside and out. Brother Krishna kept his inner honey safely protected behind a rather severe countenance. But once you knew him it was child's play to reach in behind the prickly barrier and get at his honey. He was both a father and a mother to us; taking care of the fuses when they blew so that we could make our electric appliances work, warming water for us with his giant element so that we could wash our hair with warm water, giving us advice, telling us entertaining stories - during the day. At night Mr. Rao took over because like myself he liked to go to bed quite late. Mr. and Mrs. Rao would invite me into their room and, sitting on the end of their bed and sharing their quilt, Mr. Rao would tell me beautiful stories, always with a spiritual significance. How I regretted not having a recorder with me, because with my poor memory I cannot remember any of the stories, but those evenings passed with Mr. and Mrs. Rao made up, just a little, for the evenings we could no longer spend with Babuji on his veranda.

Mr. and Mrs. Rao and Mr. Krishna did not always hit it off very well together. It was easy to see why but we loved each one of them very dearly and reunited them harmoniously in our hearts.

As usual we went in to see Babuji in the morning. The building was still going on and Babuji was always apologising for the mess. Nobody cared, if Babuji was there everything else was eclipsed. Watching the builders was fascinating and gave the same impression of travelling back in time as in the printing press. The tools they used were worthy of an anthropological museum. The carpenter was preparing window and door frames and boring holes for the screws with the most ingenious substitute for an electric drill that I have ever seen. It looked rather like the bow of a cello with the cord of the bow twined around the handle of the drill. By making exactly the same movement as a cellist with his bow the gimlet turned, boring a hole with the auger bit to receive the screw! Amazing! The mason and his little boy were busy making ballast with the cracked and broken bricks. On each finger they had placed hard leather protections in case they missed their target with the hammer! The bricks were delivered regularly in twin baskets, placed over the back of an ox. Time just does not matter in India.

*

* *

The driveway into and out of the Ashram was paved with red bricks. After a while tufts of grass and weeds grew up in the interstices between the bricks. The poor gardener painstakingly rooted them out from in between the

bricks, one after the other. The bricks measured only about 10 X 20 cms so it was a hopeless job, particularly as the driveways were quite long. He had hardly finished weeding half of one of the driveways when the grass and weeds had regrown and filled up the interstices again. We asked Babuji why the gardener did not just simply spray the driveways with weedkiller. He replied that he was averse to destroying nature, that the gardener would be out of work because the job would be too quickly done but that if there was no other possible solution, only then would he envisage using such drastic measures.

*
* *

After several days of homeopathic doses of Babuji's presence, I could not stand it any longer, and asked Babuji if we could come back to see him in the afternoon. Babuji said no because there was going to be a storm. I looked up at the sky. It was a beautiful clear blue, without the slightest wisp of a cloud in sight for miles around. This was really the last straw! Who did Babuji take us for? Blatantly he just did not want to see us. Hurt to the quick and feeling totally rejected we both left with numb hearts, wondering all the way back to the Ashram, where our loving and lovable Babuji had disappeared to.

Each one reacted according to her temperament. My companion went on a spending spree in Shahjahanpur, having seen some interesting saris in stalls on the way down from the railway station. I locked myself up in my room and wept the whole day. Brother Krishna, wondering why I had not come down all afternoon,

came up and knocked on my door to see what was the matter, or maybe by this time there were pools of tears coming out under the door. I could not very well leave him standing outside and had to open the door and let him in. Shocked by my red eyes Krishna asked why I was crying like that. I poured it all out. Master did not love us any more. He did not even want to see us. We would never come over here again. Krishna was laughing his head off which I thought very insensitive in view of my distress. He said: "I just don't understand you people. How can you doubt Master's love like this?" He had some "without-sugar-tea" brought up to try and cheer me up but there was nothing to be done, my heart was definitively broken. Shaking his head Krishna gave it up as a bad job and left. About an hour later there was a tremendous thunder-clap, followed by a downpour of hailstones. Krishna came running back up to my room and banged on the door. "You see" he said. "What did I tell you? It was Babuji's love that made him want to avoid your getting drenched and maybe being injured by the hailstones." He went off gleefully, leaving me feeling a bit ashamed of myself and my faithlessness.

It was almost dark when my companion got back and she had quite a story to tell. When she had finished her shopping she found herself quite near to Babuji's house and decided that she would disobey and go and see him anyway. Babuji was in his office talking to some people and she sat down discretely and a bit nervously in a remote corner of the veranda. Suddenly the storm broke and down came the hailstones. Babuji came out of his office, bent down, scooped up a handfull of hailstones and dropped them on her knees saying: "Do you

believe me now?", went back into his office and resumed his discussion. When the storm had calmed a little she left for the Ashram. In the newspapers the next day, the storm had made the headlines, as it would seem that some of the hailstones were very big, weighing up to five hundred grams. Crops had been hacked to pieces and people injured. So there was Babuji's love, protecting us and we had been too faithless to realise it.

*
* *

Babuji's grandson, Chintu, was a terror. Of course, with all that ground-level material Babuji's office was paradise for Chintu, everything being just the right height for a two-year old. In he would go, knocking over Babuji's before bath oil, after bath oil, eye drops, scattering the papers all over the place, with Babuji after him shooing him out. It was terribly funny to see Babuji in this role of a harassed Grandpa. We quite often helped Babuji to catch Chintu because with his floppy sandals he could not run very fast.

*
* *

Now that the Ashram existed Babuji was swamped with requests from abhyasis who wanted to escape from the context of their everyday lives and take up residence permanently in the Ashram. Similar requests came from abhyasis who had reached retirement age, no longer had any obligations and wanted to finish their lives in the Ashram, as near to Babuji as possible. Babuji generally refused these requests, not encouraging

social dropouts on the one hand and on the other hand not wanting to transform the Ashram into a home for the elderly. He also tried to show by his example that we have obligations to our family and society right up to the end of our existence. His children were moving back to his house with their families so he was busy enlarging the house in order to be able to provide accommodation for them. He even gave up his own room in the inner courtyard wing so as to regroup the younger generation, and used a room next to his office where meditation was held.

*
* *

A little boy about ten or twelve years old came to the Ashram quite often. He was an inquisitive little fellow, wanting to know where we came from, what we did in life, looking for coins from our country. He kept asking us to come and visit his house which was somewhere nearby. One day, having nothing else to do, we accepted his offer and followed him down the road in direction of Shahjahanpur. Then we crossed a field and came to a farm house. He insisted that we enter and we felt a bit ill at ease arriving like that, uninvited in somebody else's home. We felt even more so once we were inside because obviously there was some sort of a family reunion. The house was full of people and we were asked to sit in a room where there were only ladies. Everybody looked very solemn and nobody spoke. We were wondering how to get ourselves out of the embarrassing situation we had got ourselves into when somebody brought us some tea. Then another lady came in and introduced herself as a preceptor. She gave us a sitting and spoke to us

very kindly while everybody else looked at us disapprovingly. We left as soon as possible and went back to the Ashram. The little boy was nowhere to be seen which was a good job for him because really he had put us in a tight spot. When we arrived back we got quite a telling off from one of the residents who said that they had been frantic with worry, that they were responsible for our safety, that Master would not be pleased at our going off like that without telling anybody, that the countryside was infested with dacoits (we were getting pretty well fed up with these dacoits), that... and while he ranted and raved at us we wondered if he realised that he was speaking to two fully emancipated westerners who, daily, had to confront more dangerous and daring situations than walking five hundred metres down a country road in broad daylight. Anyway, as the poor man seemed very upset we put on our most docile expressions and listened patiently. Everybody was very cool with us for the rest of the day.

One afternoon when we were upstairs resting, somebody called out: "Master is coming". We got up very quickly and saw Babuji from the balcony going towards the corner where the cow was tied up. By the time we got down he had left. It had only taken us a few seconds to get down so he must really have been in a hurry. We were exasperated. The worst of it was that we had to wait until the next morning to tell him so.

I was always very polite to Babuji, choosing my words carefully and speaking to him in a particularly gentle tone, mostly because I loved and respected him very much but also because he was such a slight little man, if one spoke too loudly he might have blown away. When I said to Babuji:

"What sort of a Master are you anyway, coming out to the Ashram to say hello to the cow and going back without even having passed the time of the day to your abhyasis?", he looked quite taken aback. To be spoken to like that by Chari was an everyday affair for Babuji but coming from me it was a bit unusual. With admirable composure he replied that he had been to see the family of a preceptor near the Ashram who was in mourning and that the custom was to return home directly without speaking to anybody in between. "Except to the cow", I thought but refrained from saying so. With horror we realised that we had unwittingly barged into a mourning party in the nearby farm house!

The Ashram out in HarDOI Road was Babuji's instrument of torture for making us Goal conscious. He lived only a few miles from there. But how inaccessible it made him. So near and yet so far. When we added up the brief moments we had spent with Babuji, ten minutes here, a quarter of an hour there, it came to six and three-quarter hours in fifteen days! Deep down we knew that Babuji was just doing his job as our spiritual guide. Cutting off an over-attachment to the Master, getting us used to the idea that he would not always be there, forcing us to become spiritual adults. We knew all that, deep down, but at the human, surface level we protested like spoilt children, feeling that Babuji was too hard on us, his pills too bitter to swallow, that it was too sudden. However, Babuji knew that he did not have very much time left to him to try and make adults of us. So I for one left, vowing never to come back. After all, I could sit at home in EtOy and become Goal conscious because I could not be

with Babuji. I did not have to be in Hardoi Road for that!

*
* *

The day after getting home I went into town to do some shopping, passed in front of a travel agency, went in, enquired about any interesting airticket rates for India and made temporary reservations to go back in December of the same year. Human logic! And what a powerful magnet Babuji was!

*
* *

Roland's health having improved a bit he decided he would take the risk and go to India to see Babuji. We took our son Peter with us who was nine years' old at the time. Two other abhyasis came with us as well. It was the "high season" in Shahjahanpur because at the end of December a lot of people have holidays and used them to go and see Babuji. The Ashram was quite full and sleeping material was a bit short, so we were given two quilts for three people. We took turns to sleep in the middle because when the two people sleeping on the outside turned over to sleep on their shoulders during the night, the two overlapping quilts naturally separated and the poor devil in the middle was left with his/her teeth chattering until the following morning. Brother Krishna finally found a sleeping bag for us which somebody had left behind them in the Ashram. Brother Krishna was run off his feet, heating water for all the ladies. He had his usual winter attire which consisted of a warm dressing gown

and a woolen cap pulled down over his ears. His cap had a tassel and the cord of his dressing gown had two. As they swung about quite a lot, even when he was still, he always seemed to be in movement.

It was quite an exodus each morning when all these people went into Shahjahanpur to see Babuji. Some on foot, some in rickshaws. As his office could not accommodate all of the abhyasis Babuji had the cobblestoned courtyard covered with sackcloth so that people could sit on it for meditation. He sometimes came out to see us all in the afternoon, and certain days he held *satsangh* in the new meditation hall. Quite often he went around to inspect the premises with all the abhyasis pressing on his heels. We tried to keep him with us as long as possible. He was taken in and out to the Ashram in a car now. For quite a while the abhyasis had been trying to persuade Babuji to let them buy a mini-bus among themselves so as to organise a pick-up service between the railway station and the Ashram and the Ashram and Babuji's house. Babuji refused saying that it would deprive the rickshaw-cyclists of their means of livelihood and added that it is easy enough to buy an elephant but it is not easy to feed it. Meaning that the running costs would be too high in his opinion. However, one abhyasi found a very clever way of getting Babuji to accept a car for his own use. He told Babuji that when he was away travelling he did not know where to leave his car for safekeeping and asked Babuji would he mind letting him use his out-house. As the car would certainly go rusty if it was never used he asked Babuji if he would be kind enough to have it driven around a bit. Very clever fellow, he should be in the diplomatic service!

That car caused more concern to Babuji than any elephant could ever have done. He was always having it washed and shined. If it was parked for more than five minutes a cover was put over it. When not in use it was put in the out-house. Even then he was not reassured and asked the driver to put a protective cover over it. The driver would explain that that was why it was in the garage - to protect it! It was not necessary to put the cover on it as well. Babuji would go on to say that something might fall on it. The driver would ask what could possibly fall on it if it was in the garage? Babuji would insist that something might fall down from the ceiling of the out-house and damage the car. For the sake of peace the driver put the protective cover over the car, in the garage, and Babuji was able to sleep...!

*

* *

As there were quite a lot of people staying in the Ashram, the Indian ladies helped the cook to prepare the chapatis for the evening meal. The cook had prepared round balls of dough which the ladies, first of all flattened with the palms of their hands, and then rolled out into a perfectly round shape with tiny little rolling pins. They were very expert at it. I had a try but the chapatis came out all uneven around the edges, so I tried to give the circular form by turning a small bowl upside down and cutting it out. Apparently this was cheating and, as I was made to understand that I was making an awful nuisance of myself, I just helped with the first step, by flattening out the dough and then passing it on to an Indian sister who rolled it out with the dexterity born of long practice. The rolled out dough was cooked in the embers of an

open fire where it swelled up like a bull-frog if it had been well rolled out, and remained flat if such was not the case. In terms of Indian culinary art the quality of the chapati was judged from its ability to swell up or not. As it subsided immediately once the hot air had escaped, by the time it was served it was flat again anyway. So how the consumer could possibly know is a mystery. All this activity was carried on, sitting around the hearth of the kitchen of which the walls were blackened by the smoke from the fires. There was one official cook employed by the Ashram and, according to the number of people for whom meals were to be prepared, people gave him a hand to peel the vegetables, lay the table, etc. The dining-room and kitchen were adjoining. Behind the kitchen there was a sort of a trough with several taps where we washed the plates and cutlery after use.

The water was cold and we rubbed the plates first of all with a mixture of sand and cinders and then rinsed it off. The plates were never really one hundred percent clean because without hot water and soap the grease could not be washed off properly. However, within the Ashram the Divine took care of the germs and if one kept to eating what was given in the Ashram only, generally one did not get sick. However, people who bought things in the market got very sick indeed. Our poor son, Peter, being only nine years' old at the time, people wanted to spoil him by giving him sweets and cakes bought in the market. Inevitably, after a few days he got very sick and had "motions", to use the beautiful euphemism our Indian brothers and sisters use for severe diarrhoea. Feeling very queasy he could no longer palate the spicy food and stopped eating. So I had

to prepare food for him myself over the open fire. With a smudged face and running eyes from the smoke of the fire, and singed clothes, I finally produced a plate of food to take up to the poor child who had not eaten for several days and whose ribs and vertebrae were becoming more prominent each day. It never got to him because I tripped going up the stairs, dropped the plate, broke it and splattered the food all over the stairway. After cleaning up the mess as best I could with the material available, I had to go back to the kitchen and start the whole operation all over again! I was beginning to see what it was like to be an Indian housewife!

The poor boy was in a sorry state and started to turn a greenish-black colour. I was becoming increasingly alarmed and thought that my son was going to die. He was so weak he could no longer walk by himself. Babuji recommended some local concoction of herbs but it was so foul-tasting he could not swallow it. So he spent his days in a semi-comatose state, lying on the ground in that room. The Ashram sweeper began to wonder why he was not allowed into the room. When he saw me half-carrying, half-dragging the child to the bathroom, he understood. In any case, sweeping the room consisted of working up a whirl-storm of dust with his twig brush and then letting it settle down again all over one's belongings.

Within the new set-up departure day had a highlight. As the train for Delhi left a little before midnight, on our last evening we were allowed to wait in Babuji's house until it was time to go to the station. Nowadays it was a big treat, before that it had been an everyday occurrence! We were sitting

with Babuji on the veranda, savouring our last few moments with him before our departure, when poor Peter who was so weak he could not even sit upright on his chair, knelt on the ground and put his head on the seat of the chair as a pillow. Babuji gave one of his discreet half-sympathetic, half-amused smiles and told him to go and lie down on the cot in his office. Not on Lalaji's of course, the other one!

The Setting Sun

Babuji came to Europe again in summer 1980. As the years passed, his health and strength declined more and more. He could no longer go around to visit all the main centres in Europe so it was decided that he would stop over in Denmark and Germany. There was an agreement that the abhyasis from other countries should go to either one or the other but not both so as to divide the number of visiting abhyasis as equally as possible between the two centres. The Swiss abhyasis were to go to Denmark.

Babuji was very weak and he spoke so softly it was a little difficult to communicate with him. If we asked him to repeat what he said we could see that it exhausted him. If Chari was not by his side to explain, it was practically impossible to make out what he was saying. It was a source of sadness to many, not only because we were witnessing the toll time took on the physical frame of our beloved

Master but also because Babuji always said that when one's love is great enough we understand with the heart.

The love the abhyasis had for Babuji was tremendous but still it was not sufficient to allow us to understand him. How great Chari's love then, he who understood every word! Sometimes when Chari speaks to us sternly, striving thereby to make us delve into ourselves and bring forth the treasures we have hidden inside, he says nobody really loved Babuji. But love him we did. It may be a pale image of what love should be but love was certainly there and the beautiful thing is that Babuji settled for what we could give him. Our imperfect love. It was so manifest on the day he took leave of us in Denmark. It was obvious to everybody that Babuji could not possibly undertake another trip to Europe, and his distress at leaving his beloved Danes was palpable. His distress at leaving everybody, because Babuji did not show any favouritism but the devotion of the Danes was such that Chari himself, in one of his talks, admits that quite often Babuji said that he would like to live in Europe for the rest of his life because of the love and devotion he encountered there.

*

* *

When we went to see Babuji again in India he seemed to have a little more vitality, probably because he was in the surroundings and rhythm of life he was used to. He had recovered to such an extent he even spoke about coming to Europe again in September 1982! But to only one place

this time. Each country was to search for a suitable location for a large number of abhyasis.

Things had changed out in the Ashram. Mr. and Mrs. Rao were now staying in what used to be the westerners' house in Babuji's place. They were very happy, needless to say, and we were happy for them. Brother Krishna had moved away from the Ashram too and we missed them all terribly.

Naturally, before going to India we wrote to Babuji to ask his permission and sent a copy to the managers in the Ashram to let them know the time and date of our arrival. In spite of all these precautions nobody ever remembered. The train from Delhi got in to Shahjahanpur quite late and one had the choice between hanging around in the railway station until daybreak, or braving the "dacoits" and taking a bicycle-rickshaw out to Hardoi Road. There were no taxis in Shahjahanpur.

Inevitably, when we arrived at the Ashram the gates were already locked and everybody was in bed fast asleep. More than once we had to heave our twenty- kg. suitcases over the gate as best we could and let them drop down the other side and then try and climb over ourselves. It was no easy job because the gates were quite high and more often than not we either tore our clothes or knocked the heels off our shoes. When we finally managed to get in, without breaking our necks, and wake somebody up, they seemed very surprised by this dishevelled apparition in the middle of the night and wanted to know "Who are you?" Really! Sometimes we had a very unholy and very unspiritual impulse to box somebody's ears! We forgave them of course because it is true

that when you had spent some time with Babuji everything else was forgotten. Babuji had the same effect as the delete key of a computer. Everyday life was completely obliterated from one's memory. You had a family and friends somewhere but you could no longer remember what they looked like.

There was a lot of activity in the Ashram getting Babuji's "cottage" ready. It was generally understood, or misunderstood, that Babuji would move out to the Ashram and take up residence in this cottage. Carpenters were making a bed for him with sandalwood! It was beautifully fragrant and very fitting for Babuji if ever he were to use it. "That is the question". The shavings from the wood smelled so nice we kept them, and the scent lasted for quite some time. Babuji's cottage, by Indian standards and particularly in Shahjahanpur, was quite luxurious. Although it would have been wonderful if he were to move out to the Ashram, our intuition told us that it was wishful thinking. Respectful to the end of Indian tradition, he played the role of the patriarch of his family and we could not imagine him leaving his beloved simplicity. Babuji, as already mentioned, had left his room to the younger generation and had moved into a small, narrow, dark room beside the office where we meditated. The door of his room remained open all day and Babuji seemed to be of no place and attached to no place, having more and more of less and less, as he used to say. Anybody could go into his room, he did not mind. The strong sense and need of privacy we have in the west being totally absent in Babuji. Christ's crib seemed like a five-star hotel in comparison to Babuji's room. It was dark, it was damp and smelled musty. There was no covering on the

cement floor. The whitewash on the walls badly needed redoing, making the room seem bleak. Babuji's bed was against the wall on the right side. There was another bed against the wall on the left side. A framed photograph was the only object that personalised the room. It was a photograph of Babuji when he was younger, sitting among a group of people. I do not know who the people were, if they were abhyasis or his office colleagues. Four bamboo sticks were attached with coarse string to the legs of Babuji's charpoy bed and some net of the cheapest quality was held up over the bed by the bamboo sticks, as a mosquito net. The mattress was a very thin, rag mattress with a pair of very old and much-laundered sheets and one blanket. There slept our Master! It was from here that the showers of subtlest and sublimist Divine grace were sent to us!

On the last day of our visit, Babuji invited us to stay for the evening meal. The family was now using the westerners' dining-room and with amusement I noticed that they had taken to eating in the western manner; sitting on chairs at the table and using western-style cutlery. They even had place mats and it all looked very dainty. When Babuji came into that room which was extremely dark, it suddenly seemed very bright, not inferring anything miraculous. Quite simply, there emanated from him such an effulgence, the place seemed illuminated. Babuji had had something special made for us but I do not know what it was, for how can one swallow when tears and grief at the thought of leaving him constrict one's throat?

It was the last time I was to see Babuji like that - radiant! For he did come to Europe in

September 1982 but in such a poor state of health only a superhuman will could have driven him to undertake a journey in such a sorry state. He came to say good-bye to us all, to those who could not go to see him in India. Loving to the end, beyond the limits of human physical endurance, he came to us once again, to take leave of the ones to whom he had so much to give and whom he hoped would have the wisdom to let the seeds he had sown flourish under the hand of the one he had left to continue his task, and take care of our spiritual growth.

On 19th April, 1983 everybody was informed by chain telephone calls that Babuji had left his physical form.

*Lie peacefully my Master you have done well
Of the greatness of your work time will surely tell
Your frail body was but a physical shell
Hiding might and strength that love does compel.*

*Lie peacefully my Beloved One your task is done
Humanity will awaken and darkness will it shun
What you have sown soon will be ignored by none
For the evidence is there for all to look upon.*

Oh, My Master, now that you have bereaved us and gone
In your Divine love you have thought
not to leave us forlorn
The one you have chosen, you have chosen well
He has a noble heart
He is stalwart
Your burden he can lift
To us you have left an authentic Divine gift
For the seeds you have sown fondly he tends
The wrong fraught by our thoughts constantly he mends
Lie peacefully, rest well, darkness did your grace dispel
Of the greatness of your work time will surely tell.

Epitaph for Babuji

PART FOUR

From Babuji to Chariji

I have often wondered what it must have been like for Chariji when the tremendous responsibility of continuing Babuji's task was entrusted to him. Doubtless, Babuji had prepared and strengthened him progressively over the years, as well as giving him keener and keener insight into our conditions and their causes, so that he could do the work when the time came. Of course, Chariji had had plenty of time to get used to the idea, as he had been nominated by Babuji several years before, although the name of Babuji's successor had not been publicly revealed before his death. Nevertheless, what must it have been like for him when the part of Babuji's power that Chariji was able to assimilate was infused into him by Babuji when he left his physical form? He had

passed among us as our brother, he had known us before, or thought he knew us, taking us at face value and now he had to look without flinching at the not-so-nice side of our natures, unshielded by any social mask. How difficult it must have been for him.

It was also not particularly easy for him to follow a spiritual guide of Babuji's calibre, people kept making comparisons. Parents who have adopted fairly grown-up children know how difficult the mutual adjustment is. Chariji's situation as a spiritual guide learning his job, was a little similar. There you had all these adult children watching a young father learning the art of becoming a perfect parent. Some watched in wonder, delighting in the unique and touching experience of witnessing the making of a Master. Those who looked with love learnt reciprocal tolerance, affection and tenderness. Others saw nothing but his humanity, criticised and eventually dropped off. Forgetting that the very humanity they reproached him with and which we have seen change and transform itself, serves as a yardstick for seeing what we can become once we have learnt to overcome our own humanity, with the help of one who has faced exactly the same difficulties and walked the same path as all of us. Chariji was not spared in any way and received no favouritism. We have seen him being beaten on the anvil of destiny. He was dragged through law courts, publicly humiliated and made little of. As a result of all this suffering he went through, we have seen the taming of the lion in him. His facets had also to be cut so that his inner treasure could emerge and sparkle.

People often ask if it was easy to accept Chariji after Babuji and what it was like to have to get used to a different spiritual guide. First of all, it might be a good idea to turn the question around the other way. How did Chariji feel about it? He was offered a choice only once, many years ago, when Babuji asked him to be his spiritual representative. At that time he could say yes or no. When he said yes in 1974 Chari was not yet the Chariji we know now. Was his perception in the spiritual domain deep enough at that time, for him to know what he was letting himself in for? Maybe, or maybe not. So when he said yes, it may very well have been without having full cognizance of what he would have to assume. From then on, once he had made this commitment to Babuji, there was no longer any question of a choice.

When an aspirant seeks a guru and finally finds him, he has the choice of accepting or not accepting that guru. The guru also has the possibility of accepting or refusing an aspirant. However, when you agree to take over from another person, you are committed to the people that that other person had accepted, so you have no choice. We, as abhyasis, have the choice of either staying or going away. Chariji, held by the commitment he made to Babuji, cannot walk away from us. It is for this reason that it seems important and only fair to ask oneself first of all, how did he feel about having to accept us? And above all, how did he feel about being rejected by all the people who had the possibility of not accepting him? It was so one-sided. His spiritual strength permitted him to survive but as a human being...? He has a human heart and human sentiments after all, like all of us.

When you have tried to see things from his point of view, in comparison to Chariji's lot, our part seems easy. Then, in taking this viewpoint into account, when you turn the question back around the way it was, the situation appears in its right perspective. To reply to that question, the person writing these lines had no trouble in accepting Chariji as her spiritual guide. Having complete and utter confidence in Babuji, the choice he had made, as concerns his spiritual representative, could not but be the right one and was accepted as such without question. This, in itself, was enough but there was the added advantage of having been able to observe Chariji closely when he was still an abhyasi and ascertain his integrity, his capacity for love, devotion and service as well as his intelligence, not the intelligence of the mind, although he has that too, but the intelligence of the heart. The same sort of intelligence as Babuji which understands without having to be taught, without higher education. The sort of intelligence without which even a very learned person can be supremely stupid. Was it difficult to accept his human side? Not at all! On the contrary, it is rather a source of hope, as his humanity permits us to recognise ourselves in him, and seeing how beautifully he overcomes that humanity and watching it, in turn, mellow into generous tolerance and understanding of others is tremendously encouraging. As well as that, Babuji was confident that he would become what he has become, so what was there to be afraid of?

If problems there were, they were at a different level. For one thing, the relationship needs to be completely readjusted from one of friendly brother and sister abhyasi terms to that of a respectful abhyasi - spiritual guide distance.

Then there is a tendency to filter what Chariji says through what Babuji said about the same subject.

When you arrive at a Master's feet and there is mutual acceptance, the situation is clearly defined from the outset. We come for help and we accept the Master's instructions without question. Then our dependence on him grows, as does our love for him which becomes boundless. Imperfect maybe but sincerely felt, most definitely. It is rather like a father daughter/son relationship where love and affection can be shown without reserve and where the father's authority is supreme and an accepted thing.

When a former brother has to fit into the role of a father, a certain number of problems crop up. The problem of obeying his instructions without question. So obedience takes time to come, as does surrender. For a brother one feels a sort of vague affection and fondness. So love also takes time to come. However, Chariji went to Babuji's school and in turn became a Master of finding his way into one's heart. So even if it takes time, that same boundless love springs up and we are hooked just as surely as by Babuji.

*Heavy is the burden that destiny did place
Upon shoulders that must needs you brace
To withstand the strain of the task
That trustingly the Divine of you did ask.*

*Never once have we seen you falter
Nor adversity your hardy spirit alter
A brother have you been by our sides
But now in you our trust abides
For you have outdistanced us by many strides
And the path you have trod those behind you guides.*

*Difficult is it for you to look behind
Your straggling followers ever to remind
That the Reality for which we have always pined
Lies through pain by which we must be refined
If with Him we are to become of kind.*

*What you demand the weak find hard to live
But our misdemeanours do you always forgive
For what we face you have faced before us
And you know the cost of becoming victorious
Over the voice of our senses ever tenacious
Which refined and attuned become sagacious.*

S. J-D.

February 1991

BOOK TWO

The Guiding Hands -

a collection of spiritual poems

by

Stella Jaquero-Davis



Shri Ram Chandra Mission
Switzerland

First Edition: 1993 - 2500 copies

© Shri Ram Chandra Mission 1993
Châtel-St-Denis, Switzerland

Illustrations by author

Photographs on the cover by kind courtesy of the
Photographic Archives of the SRCM in Denmark.

ISBN 2-940093-01-6

Contents

Preface	111
Flying Back	115
The Celestial Lion	117
Homeward Bound	119
At His Feet	121
Take Care!	123
The Seeker's Prayer	124
Who Harkens?	125
The Quest	126
Star-Gazing	129
Just For Fun	131
Blasphemy	132
Anger	133

What is love for a Divine Being? (The sunny day version)	135
What is love for a Divine Being? (The cloudy day version)	137
Did you know Babuji?	138
Taking leave of the loved one	140
Small is the heart	142
Wonderment	143
Impatience	145
Loneliness	146
The Divine within	147
Unique	148
Wondering	149
The guiding hand	150
Muse	152
In his loving care	153
Bon Voyage !	154
Happy Days	155
The Dream	157
The Great Soul	159

Preface

In the many books written by our Revered Babuji Maharaj He continually refers to the necessity of taking the concept of the Master as God. God, as He courageously states, having no mental, in His mercy, periodically sends down a great soul to deliver suffering humanity from the interminable cycle of birth and death. Similar references to taking the concept of the Master as God are to be found in the ancient sacred scriptures of India. The Master is therefore the Representative of the Divine in human form, an incarnation of His love and compassion.

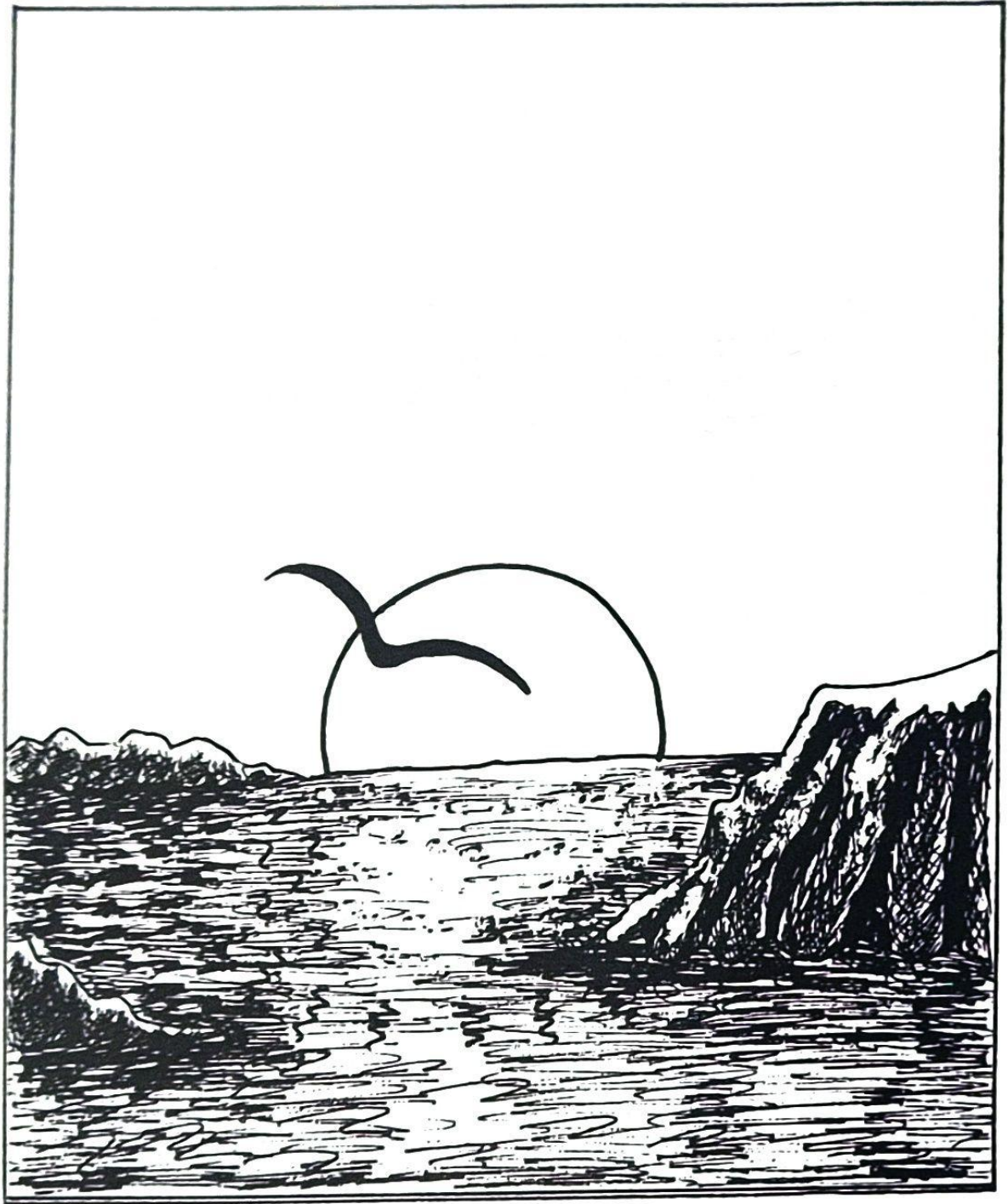
Babuji Maharaj advises us to look on the Master as our mother, father, brother or beloved until such a strong link of love develops between the Master and the disciple that the disciple becomes the beloved and the Master the lover. The disciple then willingly surrenders to the Master and by so doing extricates himself from worldly attachments of his own creation.

In these poems such terms as the "Loved One", the "Beloved", our "spiritual mother" or our "brother", are often used when referring to the Master. The Divine is sometimes referred to as the "Ultimate", "Infinity", or "Reality".

Sailing with one's Guide over the Ocean of Bliss to the Centre is not necessarily a smooth crossing. There can be squalls and tempests on the way. Some of the poems reflect moments of despair, pain, discouragement, rebellion, anger and incomprehension but offset and outweighed, nevertheless, by moments of beauty, wonderment and awe.

SPIRITUAL POEMS

Dedicated with love and profound gratitude to the first guiding hand, Babuji Maharaj, and to his successor and representative, Chari Ji, the second guiding hand.



Flying Back

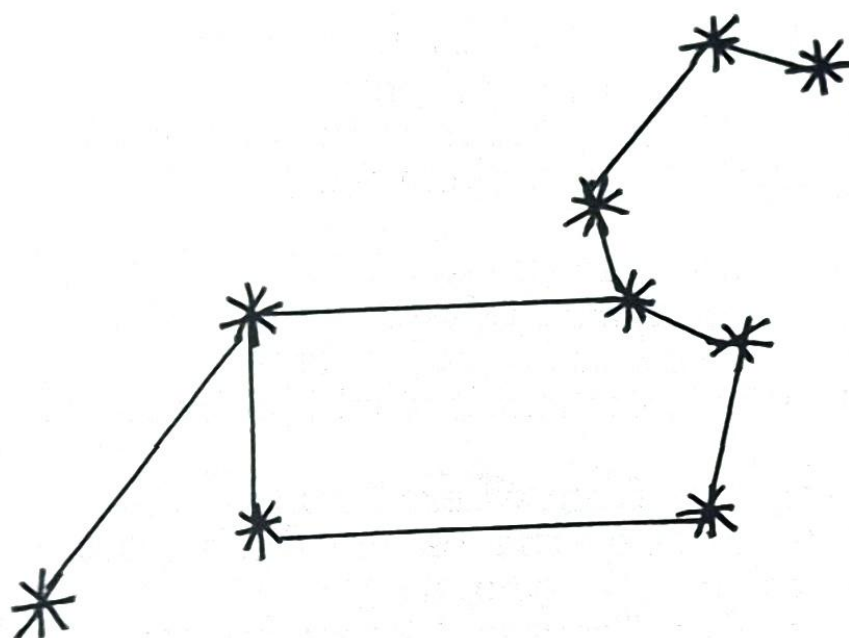
*M*y soul it would soar to its homeland
It is ever aching, ever longing.
The tide of life swept it from the mainland
Estranged, nowhere belonging.

It wanders on from life to life
Drifting from shore to shore
But never once has it caught sight
Of the One with whom it would be for evermore.

Then came one from where no one knows
A tender glance on the lost one did he pose
Come with me, I do you pray
Your flight is off course, I know the way.
I can guide you to the Beloved One's door
It is just yonder there on the Infinite Shore.

Who speaks thus? How can I trust thee?
Fear not 'tis the spiritual son of Babuji,
The Great One who in His love for all humanity
Left one to care for us - his name is Chariji.

Poona, 3.5.1991



The constellation of the Leo

The Celestial Lion

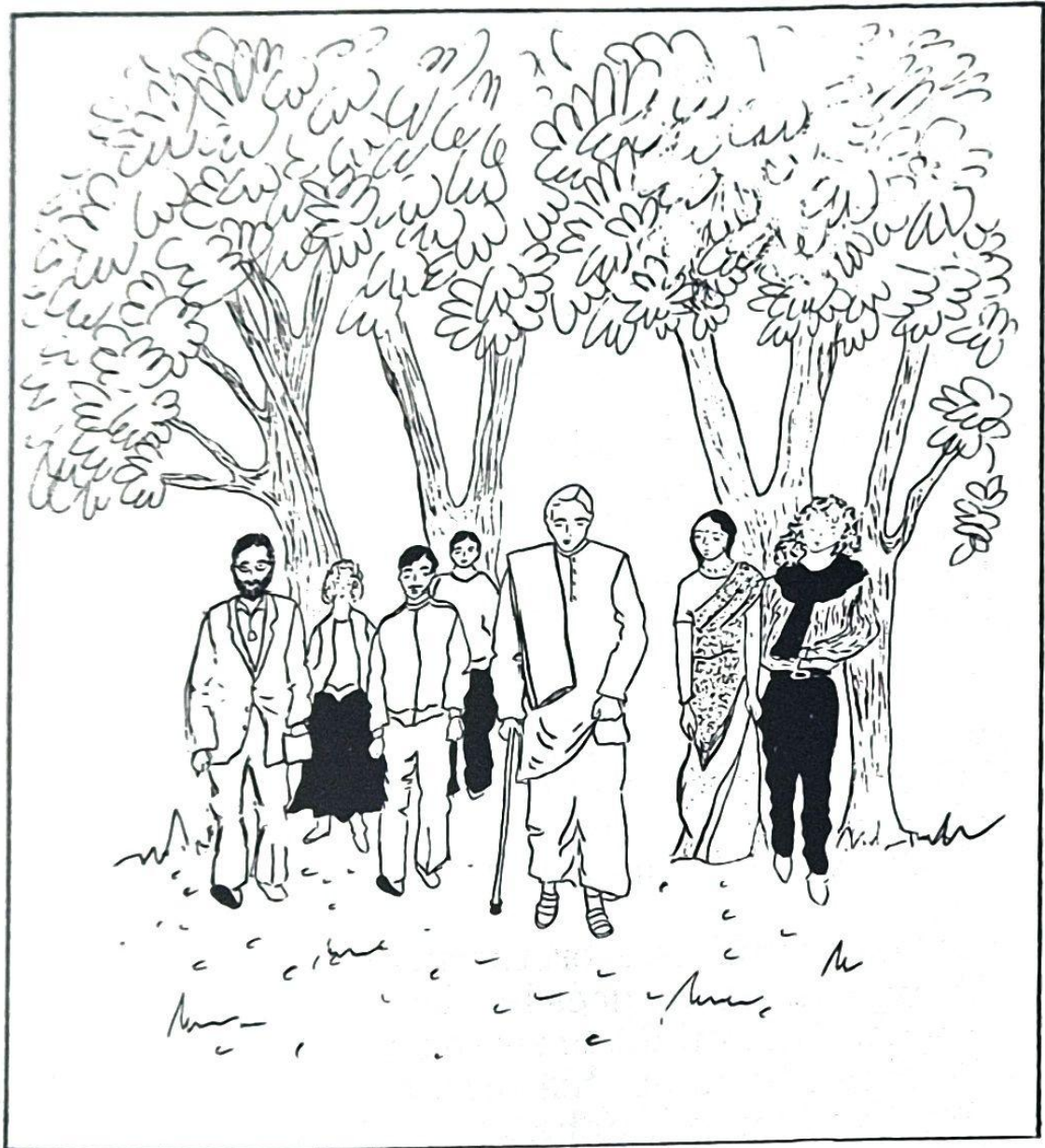
Studded in the celestial sphere
 Scintillating does he appear
 Made up of nine stars
 With him no other pars
 For he is the King of the reign
 But his realm is not of this domain.

Yonder does it lie
 With those who weep and cry
 For they have lost their way
 And strive as they may
 Their path ever eludes them
 Fallen prey to illusion
 They seek and seek in vain
 Until one with a starry mane
 Guides them to the Reality
 from which they came.

Wherefrom comes this strange creature
 Who would be our teacher?
 He is reputed to kill
 With awe does he us fill!

Be not afraid dear brethern, nay
 Only samskaras does he slay
 He uses his might to serve us
 Fear not to accept his service
 For the lion in him has been tamed
 By the hand of God himself.

Châtel-St-Denis, 31. 3. 1991



Homeward Bound

Be joyful my brethern we are homeward bound
 Slowly, step by step soon will it be found
 The Reality for which we have all been apining
 Babuji awaits us there, benevolently smiling.

He is sure that his son will not let him down
 That success surely his efforts will crown
 He has taken his fellow creatures by the hand
 And by his side we will march to that Infinite Land.

From far and wide people come athronging
 To the feet of their loved one, impatient and longing
 For one instant with him all would they forsake
 Their future they have placed in his hands to make.

Let us rejoice together to have found such a one
 That Nature has bestowed all Its grace upon.
 Generous of mind and generous of heart
 Chariji gives to each one of us a very large part.

For our spiritual immaturity ever do you chide us
 You are there continually by our sides to guide us.
 Please forgive our humanness, we long to be with you
 You cannot know how much we can possibly miss you.

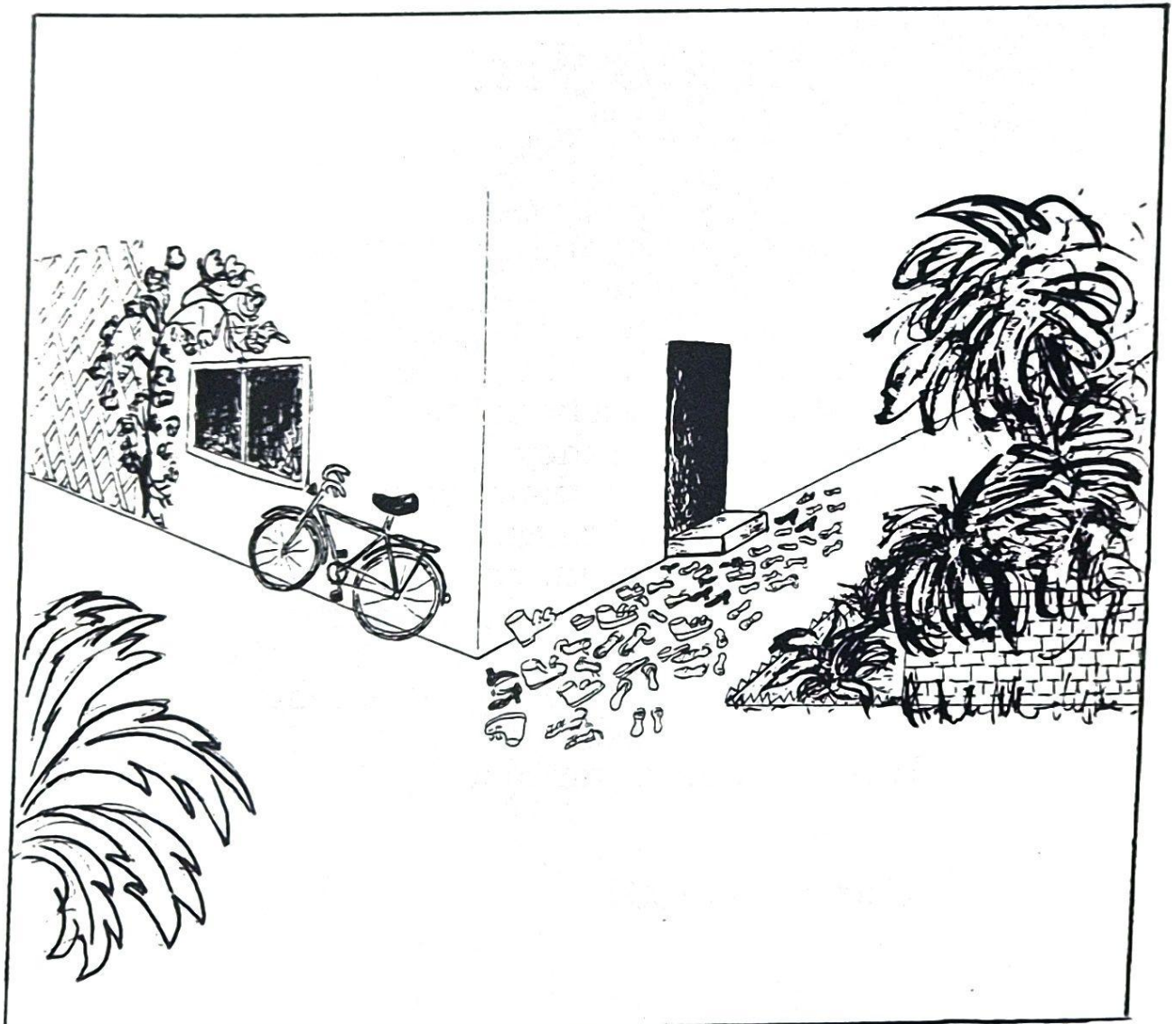
Poona, 4. 5. 1991



At His Feet

Radiant are the upturned faces
At the feet of the one they love.
The endless flow of his grace has
Transformed their hearts into that of a dove.
Soaring translucent in the sky
Ever higher will they fly.
Nothing can stop their ascension
Until their Goal comes into sight.
Firm in their intention
Not to return to the dismal plight
Which kept them in detention
Till released by a Being all of light.
His name we will not mention
But his hair is snowy white!

Poona, 5.5.1991.



Take Care!

In a shabby, shoddy hall
Where in respect for holy ground
At the door we abandon our chappals
And walk on a floor no one thought to sweep
The dust we brush from our souls
We pick up on the soles of our feet
In a shabby, shoddy hotelroom,
 does our Master sleep.

From jet to train, from train to bus
He travels all over to see us.
Fatigue and exhaustion line his face
And the years of effort leave their trace.
Take care our cherished and loved one!
Who could replace you? No one!

Bombay, 7.5.1991.

The Seeker's Prayer

Oh God! Take back this humble soul,
I have lost my way.
Forgive my numerous errors,
I do you earnestly pray.
Help me to become meritorious of being absorbed
in the Original Source.
My efforts to reach the Goal, I beg you to reinforce.

The one you have sent to guide me,
he does his level best
But I am sadly lacking and of will
would need a zest.
Please help me to co-operate with him,
so that his work is not for nought.
I would that you inspire me,
to do what I always ought.

Bombay, 7.5.1991.

Who Harkens?

*W*hen a soul cries out in distress
To be saved from the wilderness
Of a life without purpose or aim,
Of a past that fills it with shame.
Who harkens? God, he has no ears,
neither has he eyes.
Who then sees our tears? And what heart
is moved by our cries?

The Divine is nothing but love
He is conscious of all from above
He sends one of His essence
Who by his very presence
Can right complexities in a glance
And latent beauty in the heart enhance.

He may come as a delightful old man
With cap and stick and flowing beard
Nothing by him was feared
For he had might that no one could wan.

He may come as a tall Titan
That nothing seems to frighten
He works with all his strength
He would go to any length
To instil in us God's grace
So that we may be gathered in the Divine embrace.

Bombay, 8.5.1991.

The Quest

If the sea, wave by wave, can transform hard rock
into beautiful silvery sand
That trickles and glides through the fingers
when we hold it in our hand,
If a gull who plays on the wind,
through fog and mist finds his way back from sea,
Then why, my Lord why, can't I find my way
back to Thee?

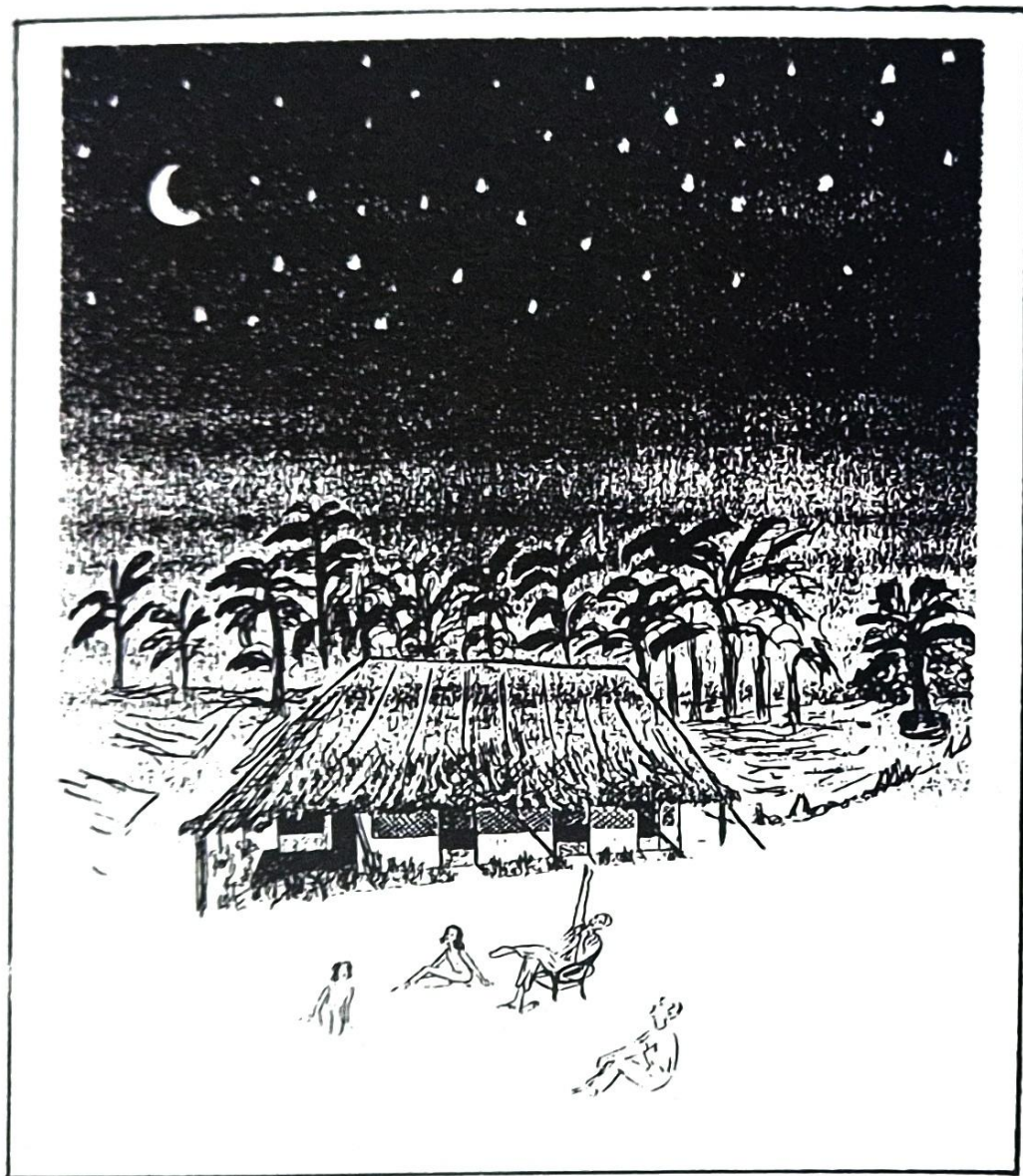
Is my heart harder than granite
that the sea of time has not pounded it to dust?
Is my vision so blurred and fogged
that to live in obscurity I must?
If man is the king of God's creation
then why so complex is he?
Why, my Lord why, can't I find my way back
to Infinity?

Let me help you to answer your question
said a man clad all in white
I would make the following suggestion
to put an end to your plight.
Look out over the water and on the horizon
you will see
A beautiful gliding galleon
with sails and flags billowing free.

The seafarer could get lost on the ocean,
were it not for sextant, rudder and stars
Of navigation one needs a notion
otherwise our direction it surely mars.
Your ship needs a captain
to keep it from going adrift.
If your quest is to rejoin the Loved One,
then I can certainly make your journey swift.

You need no longer bewail the Beloved, saying:
"Why can't I be with Thee?"
If you need to correct your direction
you can always rely on me.
I would that what you say be true
but where can I find thee?
It is really very simple, you just call for Chariji.

Madras, 9. 5. 1991.



Star-Gazing

*W*hen the sun had finished shedding light
And settled in the West for the night
Many lanterns in the sky were lit
At Chariji's feet did we all sit,
Stargazing - wondering what their names could be
While a breeze fanned us very gently.

Happy were we to sit there
In the coolness of the night air
Bathing in the waves of transmission
That he poured on us without remission
While the palmtrees protected us all around
Guarding the limits of the holy Ashram ground
Out there in Manappakkam.

Madras, 10. 5. 1991.



Just For Fun

Being the representative of the Divine
does not necessarily incline
To being stately and aloof,
of a sense of humour have we had proof.
Within the white-haired sexagenarian
lies a very young man
Who, with his many disguises, likes to surprise us,
whenever he can.
Dressed in winter attire,
plus fours and moon boots may we admire.
Or with staff and folded-up dhoti,
who is he now - Ghandi?
From what culture does he come, when just for fun,
American kickers and Punjabi suit he puts on?
The lion he may roar,
but the Master certainly does not bore!

Lausanne, 15. 5. 1991 (for the 11th May)



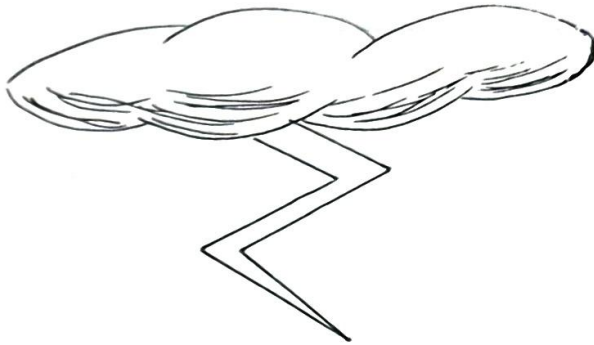
Blasphemy

When buffeted by life helplessly
 A prayer rises from the heart endlessly
 Dear God please set my atoms free
 Why did you ever create me?

I never really wanted To Be
 Your Kshob estranged me from Reality
 Now I am your responsibility
 Please lead me back to Infinity.

To-day I hate almost everybody
 Myself more than anybody
 We beg and supplicate you earnestly
 We think of you always lovingly
 That is to say - usually
 Now rather rebelliously
 I tax you with irresponsability
 We suffer daily hellishly
 Because Creation was done rashly
 Without asking the created if they wanted to be
 Part of life's "nonsensity"!

Lausanne, 14.6.1991



Anger

*M*y dear brother I would berate you!
Why do you strive to make me hate you?
With others you smile, with me you frown,
You make my spirits really down.
Why be so beastly in the way you treat me?
Why all this Shrapnel? It is sheer hell.
It hurts all over and moreover
What have I done wrong that you should scowl at
me all day long?
I have had enough, you are far too tough.
You make my heart bleed. I would with you plead
To play a fair game with one without blame
Who does her best to set you at rest
That all goes as well as is humanly possible!

Châtel-St-Denis, January 1991.



What is love for a Divine Being?

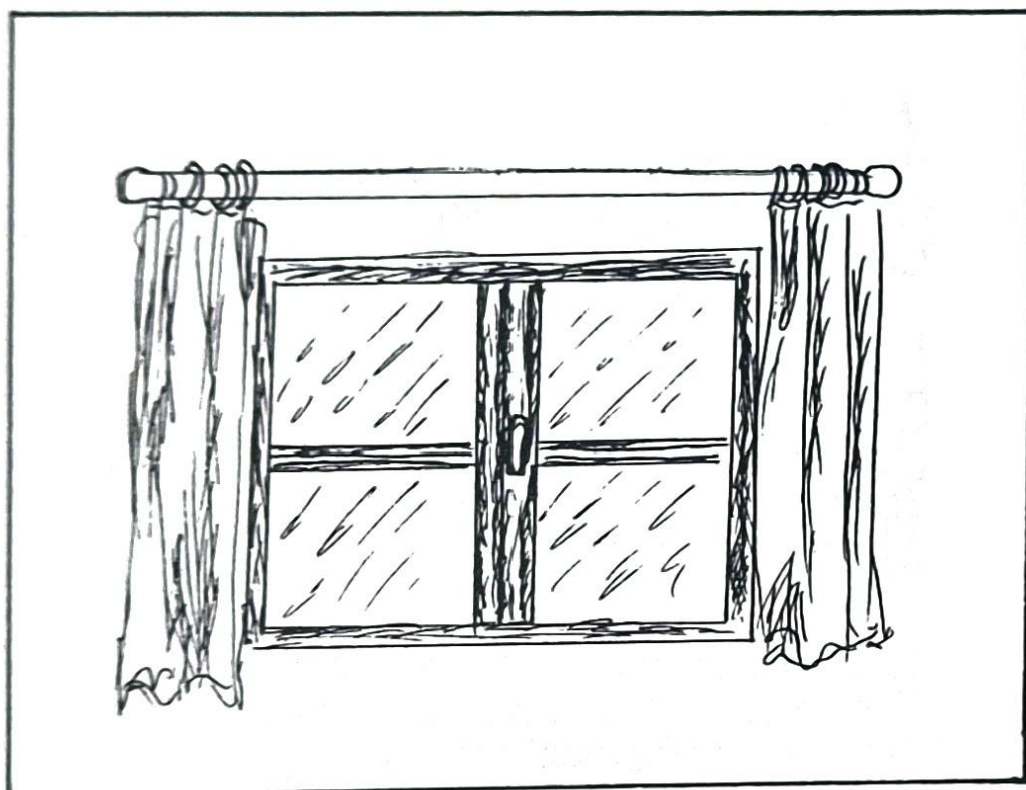
(The sunny day version)

*It is a warm glow in the heart
Which forms an essential part
Of being spiritually alive
Love makes our condition thrive.*

*It gives wings to the soul
So that it may fly to its goal
It makes the heart sing
With music unending
That rings out for ever
When with the loved one we are together.*

*It also wrings and tears the heart
When from the Loved One we are apart
Only in a physical sense
We always feel His presence
One thought of Him and He is there
If we really look we find Him everywhere.*

Châtel-St-Denis, 2 July, 1991.



What is love for a Divine Being?

(The cloudy day version)

It is a beautiful but terrible thing
Because it gives the Loved One power
To inflict hurt and to sting
The poor heart offered like a flower.

When we offer love as big as an ocean
We leave our hearts far too open
To contempt and scorn
Better to close it and protect it with thorn
Otherwise there is too much pain
For the poor heart to sustain.

One drop of your affection
 and the heart blossoms forth
If denied, alas, it stunts its growth
So much have I wept no more tears are left
Without you my heart is sad and bereft.

Châtel-St-Denis, 3. 7. 1991

Did you know Babuji?

Did you know, dear Babuji, you who knew all
That one day you were to be the author
 of a feat in no way small?
Did you know, our dearest Lord, who knew all
 before it came to pass
That one day you could look proudly
 at the most gifted pupil of your class?

Did you know, our Loved One,
 who had the kindest heart
That of your teachings, your disciple,
 would make a fine art?
He wields them with mastery
 for his fellow creatures' upliftment
So that by the grace of our spiritual forefathers
 we may reach the heights of the Holy Firmament.

Did you know, our Beloved Babuji,
 the light of our souls
You, who made it possible
 to reach our Infinite Goals,
That verily, you may be in awe
 of what you have done?
His work does you credit
 and our hearts he has won.

Did you know all this, Babuji?
But then, surely you did,
That for years among us as a brother he hid!
He has might and of devotion has well nigh a ton.
Rest assured, our dear Father,
you have a good son!

Châtel-St-Denis, 8. 7. 1991.

Taking leave of the loved one

Divine entities in the making are spiritual embryos
Who return for nourishment to the Master's womb
He is a mother, he is a father, he is everything to us
Without him we would live in some sort of a tomb.

He carries us patiently during our spiritual awakening
Until such time as the heart throbs with love and aching
To return to the Source we have always craved for
And merge with the Ultimate, our Divine Creator.

With worldly baggage we come to him all laden down
So full of samskaras that sometimes we make him frown
Patiently he alleviates our hearts so that they may shine
With the intrinsic treasure made up of beauty Divine.

Like children we come to him, victim of our errors.
He guides us, gently chides us, points out the terrors
Of straying from the path that leads to our Home.
For our wrongs now and then he makes us atone.

Willingly, freely, we have come to him
To be corrected, to be moulded, to be filled to the brim
With Divine Grace that will make us such as he
Our Loved One, our Cherished One, our Chari Ji.

A few days, a few weeks, with him we spend
So that our hearts, our minds, our ways he may mend.
We love him, we hate him, alternately.
We respond to his treatment rebelliously.

Yet when it is time to take our leave
When the day of departure is at its eve
We weep as though our hearts would break
With sobs of despair our shoulders shake.

Bravely, we come to him to say good-bye
Doing our very best not to cry.
Love and care he did not stint.
One last glimpse of his dear face, his features to imprint
On the memory of time that separates and parts,
Before taking him away in the heart of our hearts.

Châtel-St-Denis, 13.8.1991

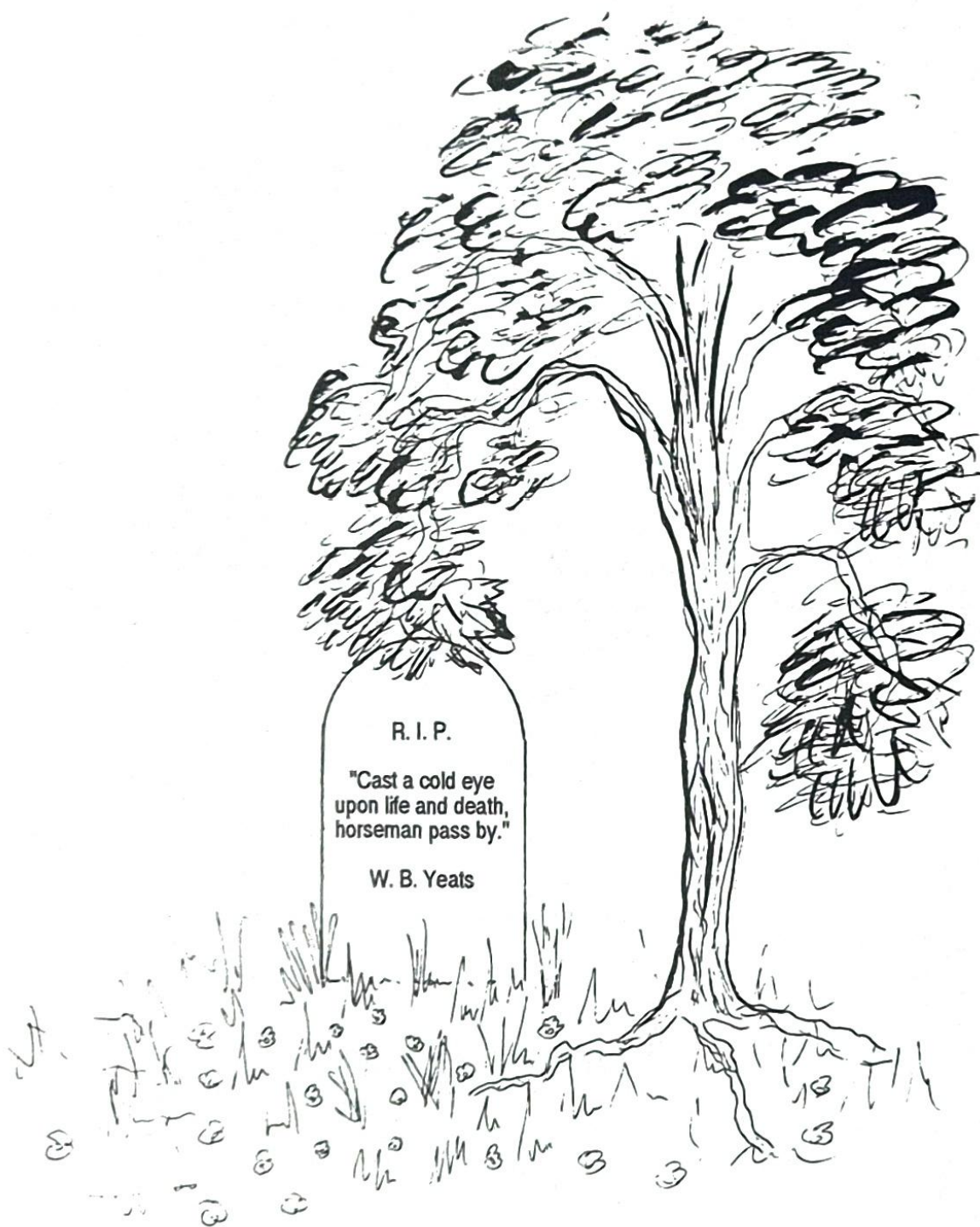
Small is the heart

*H*ow great is the pain
When the heart cannot contain
All the love we feel
We are not made of steel.
We may think we are strong
But we are entirely wrong.
All the barriers come down
With glory do we crown
He who invisibly, silently,
Unexpectedly we make the discovery,
That he occupies an essential place
That indelibly he did trace
His mark on our lives.
To him no resistance survives.
Our hearts overflow
False shame does he overthrow.
Be it woman or man
The love the heart cannot dam
As tears floods the eyes
And no matter how one tries
They spill all down our faces
And from reserve liberate us.

Châtel-St-Denis, 15.8.1991

Wonderment

*H*ail to thee, the Wise One, with love we watch you grow!
Take us with you, dear brother, wherever you may go.
With you we are sure to reach the Goal
For you have become a very great soul.



Impatience

Every second, every minute our meeting delays
All these weeks, all these months,
 years contain too many days.
Slowly, far too slowly, passes the time
Loudly, I would that my death knell may chime.

Help me, my Lord, to remain steadfast on my path
And above all in no way to incur Thy wrath
By wishing that the life span that needs to be
Spends itself quickly so that I may be with Thee.

"It is good to be impatient to be with the Divine
To wish with all your heart to make Him thine
But if to see you God awaits restlessly
Then the problem is solved", says Babuji.

Lausanne, 30th August, 1991

Loneliness

Oh my Lord! Please help this soul
The journey is lonely and long.
Nowhere is there solace
Only to You do I belong.

In Your efforts to make this soul fitter
To continue unhampered its flight,
The medicin you administer is so bitter
Inner resistance must needs I fight.

Nothing that this earth has touched
Treachery ever withstands.
On love where impartiality exists not
I must cease to make demands.

Disillusion reigns all around,
No peace can ever be found,
Till the day we are finally with Thee
By fetters and chains no longer bound.

October 1991

The Divine within

*I*n spite of what we know,
Even though we may grow and grow,
We continue to seek Him
Without rather than within,
For this temple is no worthy shrine
To house beauty such as Thine.

May we become less Philistine
And allow the treasure all Divine
From within ardently to glow
In order that Your grace may freely flow
And this being lustre and shine
So that at last I may make Thee mine.

Lausanne, 24th January, 1992.

Unique

Seldom in the human realm,
 Not one in a million, nor out of ten,
 Can be compared to the one Babuji
 Left to care for us and set us free
 From the chains of our own creation,
 Fettering feet and hampering appreciation
 Of what Reality can truly be,
 Within reach so easily.

From distant times has he come forward,
 During lives and lives has he hoarded,
 Wisdom and knowledge gained throughout the ages,
 Learnt at the feet of the greatest sages,
 To be used for the good of all,
 To help humanity rise from its fall,
 Whether it be willing, worthy or opposed
 By his grace the Ultimate's door shall be unclosed.

The unending path to Infinity does he tread,
 Smoothing the way, removing pitfalls, always ahead.
 He learns as he goes and leaves traces
 So that we may follow his giant paces
 Always swifter because the Goal is in view,
 Ardently hoping that those who reach It may not be few,
 For now is the appropriate time
 To canalise all our efforts to reach the Divine.

Lausanne, 27th January, 1992

Wondering

Our dearly beloved one, the heart of our hearts,
Of our spiritual future only you know the charts
Of which we have not the slightest inkling
But which our curiosity is constantly tickling.

What is the Divine plan behind all this suffering
Of hoping, of despairing, of struggling?
Our limited, human perception
Plunges our spirits into the deepest dejection.

It sees not the sense of this playground
Where poor emotions end up quite dumbfound
From loving and hating and hopefully waiting
For the dear one to reveal what he is planning.

Our condition we continually scan
We do the very best we can
But far away does it seem
The Goal of which we all dream.

What secret have you in store
For the one who craves more and more
To discover the exquisite joy,
To be no longer destiny's toy
And accomplish that which we all wait for
To merge with the Divine Creator.

Lausanne, 29th January, 1992.

The guiding hand

Take our hands in your hand
And lead us on the way
In your firm and steady grip
Never will we go astray.

May these hands held out in trust
Never slip from your grasp
For hold on to you we must
If the Divine we are to clasp.

Even though we may trip
Put us on our feet again
So that we may tread the path
And leave all that is vain.

May all that we encounter
In our passage through this life
Be no cause for us to falter
Or create inner strife.

With you by our sides,
With our hands in yours,
Temptation from us hides
And we fall not prey to lures.

A high price have you paid
To gain your might
From life's blows you were not spared
And you have suffered oft a slight.

Lucky are we
Who can count on your strength
You have paid dearly
To keep ahead a length.

Fine honed are you
To be God's instrument
And lead us to
The Holy Firmament.

Châtel-St.-Denis, 7.2.1992

Muse

On a rock looking out o'er the ocean
With the vast expanse of water all around
We can but of the Divine have some notion
And look for Him with faith new found.

The wind that fills the boat's sails
Making it scud swiftly o'er the waves
Howls and blusters and wails
Like a soul searching for the One it craves.

The tide which washes up on the shore
Weed from the depth of the sea floor
Also smoothes the furrows in the sand
And cleanses the blemish of waste on the strand.

The squalls which wreck and devastate,
Making waves pound cliff and scatter spray,
Like the trials of life which frustrate,
Twist and warp and cause disarray.

But the calm, when once again it is found,
Has greater value for having been lost
And when in the silence we discover His sound
We know that the Divine our way has crossed.

Lausanne, 10. 2. 1992.

In his loving care

From the depths of despair
A spiritual life makes us rise
Calming our fears, our sorrows and our cries.
For within the warmth of His loving care
Inevitably, for the better our existence will fare.

Our hesitant steps become resolute strides,
Keeping pace with the One who walks by our sides.
Nebulous objectives take a one-pointed direction,
From dispersed living our efforts tend to one
section,
Of lives which before lacked a hand that guides.

Step, by step, up the infinite stairs,
Climbing always higher till Reality glares
For those too blind to realise
That That which is now before their eyes
Was there all the time waiting to be theirs!

Lausanne, 23rd March, 1992.

Bon voyage !

Glory to thee, the dear one
Our love and hearts have you won.
May this love shed its light,
Accompany you on your flight,
To those you wish to tend,
Whose souls you must mend.

May it be with you constantly
And from care set you free.
For love sets all right,
Troubles vanish from sight,
In the warmth of its glow.
With our love, dear heart,
may you go!

Châtel-St-Denis, 27.3.1992

Happy Days

*In the holiness of the Manapakkam site
Where air and atmosphere are both light
From many lands have we all come to thee
To be with you, our beloved Master Ji.*

*In the sacredness of this special piece of land
Where nature is to be sculptured by your hand
We rejoice in unison to see
That here, at least, you seem carefree.*

*In the simplicity of this bucolic scene
Where man and ox work in a team
To plough and prepare the paddy field
So that rice from its soil it may yield.*

*In a pattern the ox swerves and turns
According to the colour of its horns.
One for port is painted sky blue
While that of starboard, bright red is its hue.*

*In the afternoon heat we sat with thee
Beneath the shade of the green mango tree.
Its fruit you cut and served salty and sour,
To remind us that life may sometimes be dour.*

*While sitting with you by the well
Many a tale of your past did you tell.
A little of your childhood did we share.
They were times of fun and without care.*

When the tasks of the day are all done
And with your abhyasis you sit among
Along comes Tumi shrieking gleefully:
"Thatha look! Come and see!"

Uttering a long and good-natured sigh,
Heavily, the lion heaves himself from his chair,
To well-earned rest he must bid goodbye
To the heavens he lifts his eyes in despair.

Children, even adored, our patience try
Over the cub's achievement the lion exclaims: "My, my!
What a fine hole for the well you have made!
Keep on digging deeper with your spade!"

Then describing a circle with your foot in the sand
To protect the work of art from all but Tumi's hand.
No other may touch the marvel of his childish world
So that the magic of what he has done
may not be spoiled.

Memories of a childhood a trifle severe
Inspire you to be less austere
And lavish affection on the little boy,
Delighting in the sight of his joy.

All these happy memories we take in and store
To be kept in our hearts for everemore.
These hearts which already belong to you
And which to you will be eternally true.

Ahmehdabad, 19th April, 1992.

The Dream

Now and again there comes a generous soul
Who, having found his own way to the Goal,
Accepts to return into this lifestream
And help mankind awaken from its dream.

A dream in which man plays the main part
Pulling the strings of his own destiny
Not realising how estranged he can be
From his true nature lying hidden in his heart.

Round and round he goes, like a puppet on a string
Imagining that it is he who is doing the pulling
Until one day, it comes like a blow,
The puppet has taken over the show!

But alas, he is all caught up
In the tangles of the string
And now nobody or nothing
Can spare him from drinking this cup.

His cries of distress were perceived
By the soul who had nothing in him
For having negated all within
Humanity's sorrows by him are received.

The great soul smiled at the sorry sight
Remembering a day once long ago
When finding himself in a similar plight
The One who made him cut the cords and let him go.

From captivity he gave quick release
Telling the prisoner to go in peace
Reminding him that of Creation there is but one
That by any other only a web is spun.

Ahmehdabad, 22nd April, 1992.

The Great Soul

*H*umanity by the Divine was blessed
This day ninety three years ago
When a great soul He did behest
To descend and help it to grow.

The times required special qualities.
The Divine selected His most precious jewel
For the gift which was to become humanity's
Possessed all these and many others as well.

His softness was like that of a mother.
The firmness of a father was also there.
He was full of tolerance like a brother.
Of spiritual capacity he had plenty to spare.

This jewel was set not in silver
Nor of gold was his clothing spun.
His bearing could not have been simpler.
Ostentation of any sort did he shun.

But yet did his presence shine
With a particular pristine glow.
Waves of love from him did flow
Making the heart yearn and pine.

For he was the mirror of the Divine
Blindingly beautiful to behold.
To not one did he ever decline
A similar condition in us to unfold.

But few were they who availed
Of the divine treasure he had to give.
Forgive us, our dear one, for having failed
To give you this joy while you still lived.

To-day, we are here to honour you
For all from you did stem.
Great credit to you is due
Beloved Babuji, jewel of the spiritual realm.

Poem written in honour of our beloved Master, Babuji, for the celebration of his birth anniversary and dedicated with love to his spiritual representative of whom he can be proud.

Bangalore, 28th April, 1992.

ISBN 2-940093-01-6

